

VAYETZE (*and he went out*)



Genesis 28:10 Jacob went out from Beer-sheba and went toward Haran (*burning anger*). C-MATS

Question: Who did Jacob encounter along the way? After Jacob left, Esau sent his son Eliphaz to kill him. Eliphaz pursued Jacob and caught up with him, but was then faced with a dilemma: on the one hand, he was duty-bound to obey his father's command to kill Jacob; on the other hand, because he had been raised by his righteous grandfather, Isaac, his conscience got the better of him and he could not bring himself to kill his uncle Jacob. So he decided to ask Jacob himself what he should do. In response, Jacob gave Eliphaz all his possessions, pointing out to him that the Torah views a poor person as dead because he lacks resources with which to influence other people. Eliphaz could now therefore tell his father that he had indeed left Jacob "dead." (Jashar)

Question: Where did Jacob go before he went to Haran? Aware of the challenges awaiting him in Haran, Jacob realized that he needed to prepare himself spiritually before going there. He therefore returned to the academy of Ever in Salem (Shem had already died by then), studying there diligently for the next fourteen years. (Jashar)

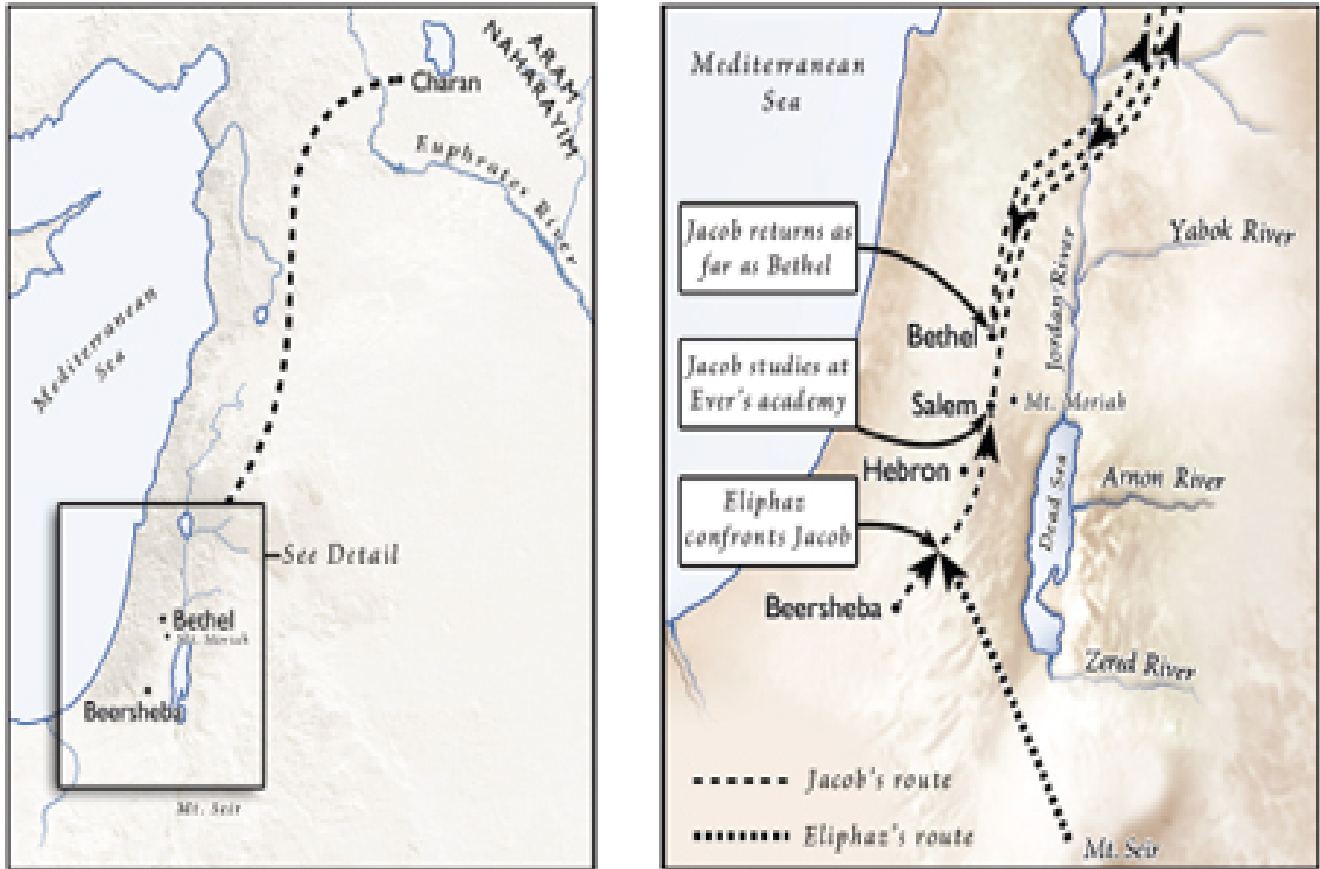


Figure 28: Jacob Travels to Charan.

Genesis 28:11 And he came upon the certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had already set; and he took some stones from that place and put *them as* his pillows and lay down in that place to sleep. C-MATS

Question: Where was that “certain place” that Jacob went? "The place" is Mount Moriah (the "Temple Mount" in Jerusalem, where Abraham had bound Isaac upon the altar and where King Solomon would erect יהוה's Temple). This is where his father and grandfather had prayed also. Chumash

Genesis 28:12 And he dreamed and there was a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven: and the angels of Elohim were ascending and descending on it. C-MATS

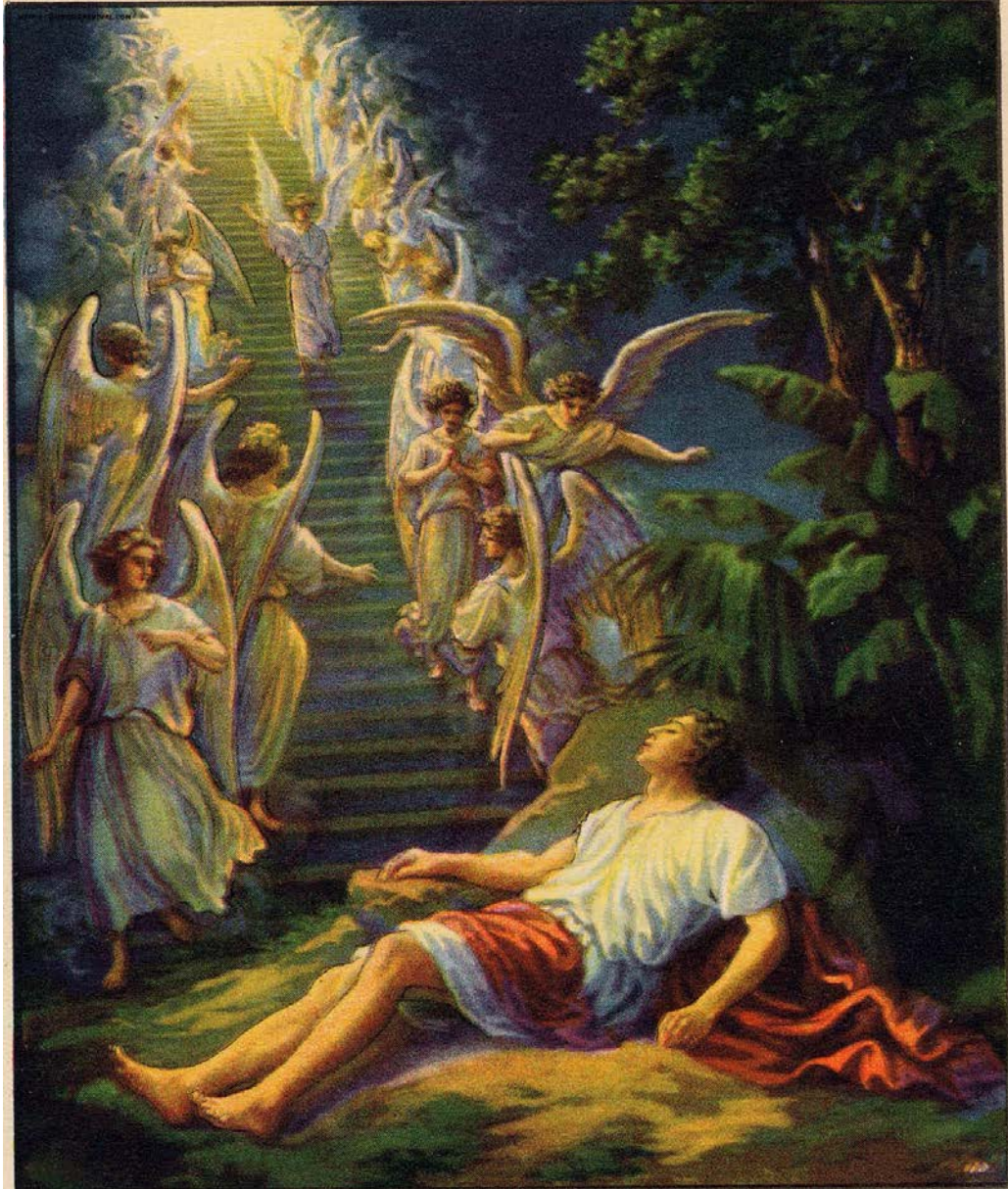
Question: Why were the angels going up and down the ladder? The angels, which are יהוה's agents in carrying out יהוה's guidance of earthly affairs, constantly go up to heaven to receive His commands and then come back to earth to carry them out through the gate of heaven. Jacob and the Hebrew nation however are under the direct guidance of יהוה who is atop the ladder. We are spoken to directly as led by His Spirit. Chumash



And יהוה stood above the ladder

Genesis 28:13 And יהוה stood above it and said, I *am* יהוה Elohim of Abraham your father and the Elohim of Isaac: the land on which **אתה** you lay I will give it to you and your seed; **14** And your descendants will be as the dust of the earth and you will spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south: and in you and in your seed will all the families of the earth be blessed. **15** And I *am* with you and will keep you in all *places* wherever you go and I will bring you again into **הָאָרֶץ** this land; because I will not leave you, until I have finished **את** that which I have spoken to you. C-MATS

Question: "The world is not יהוה's place, rather יהוה is the world's place." What do you think that means? יהוה has always existed and is everywhere. The world and the universe for that matter are things He created 'inside' of Himself, so to speak. That means that יהוה is the 'place' within which everyone and everything exists. *Chumash*



Jacob's Vision

Question: In the famous '*Shema Israel*' prayer, we say that 'יהוה יהוה is one.' What does this mean? When we say יהוה יהוה is one, we don't just mean 'and not two or three.' We are saying that everything in existence is really, at its deepest roots, a unified, infinite oneness. We call that oneness יהוה. *Chumash*

Question: Do you think יהוה יהוה is aware and concerned about the minute details of people's lives, or just the 'big events'? It might at first seem that just as the 'big events' tend to interest us more, so, too, it is with יהוה יהוה. However, יהוה יהוה is infinite, and everywhere and cares so much about each of us that our every positive action, word or thought is a 'big event' to Him and gives Him tremendous pleasure.

Question: A great holy-man once wished a group of students who came to him for a blessing that they should be just as concerned of what יהוה thinks of them, as they are what people think. How do you understand this? Even though יהוה is very real and always with us, since He isn't physical and we can't see Him it is easy to forget He's there. The sage was blessing his students that יהוה should be as apparent and immediate in their lives and affect their actions as strongly as people that they could see right in front of them with their eyes.

Spiritual exercise: One time each day - starting today - when you are alone, remind yourself that יהוה is watching you and cares what you do.



Bethel

Genesis 28:16 And Jacob awoke from his sleep and he said, Surely יהוה is in this place; and I did not know it. **17** And he was afraid and said, How fearfully reverent is this place! This is none other but the House of Elohim and this is the gate of heaven. C-MATS

Question: Where was “this place”? This is not an ordinary place, but a sanctuary of יהוה's Name, a place suitable for prayer (Targum Yonasan). It is the gate of the heavens, meaning that it is the site from which man's prayers go up to יהוה. The Heavenly Temple corresponds to the earthly Temple, so that Jacob was at the place that is the most favorable for prayer and service (Rashi). *Chumash*

Question: Why was Jacob afraid? He was afraid of Esau and Laban. *Chumash*

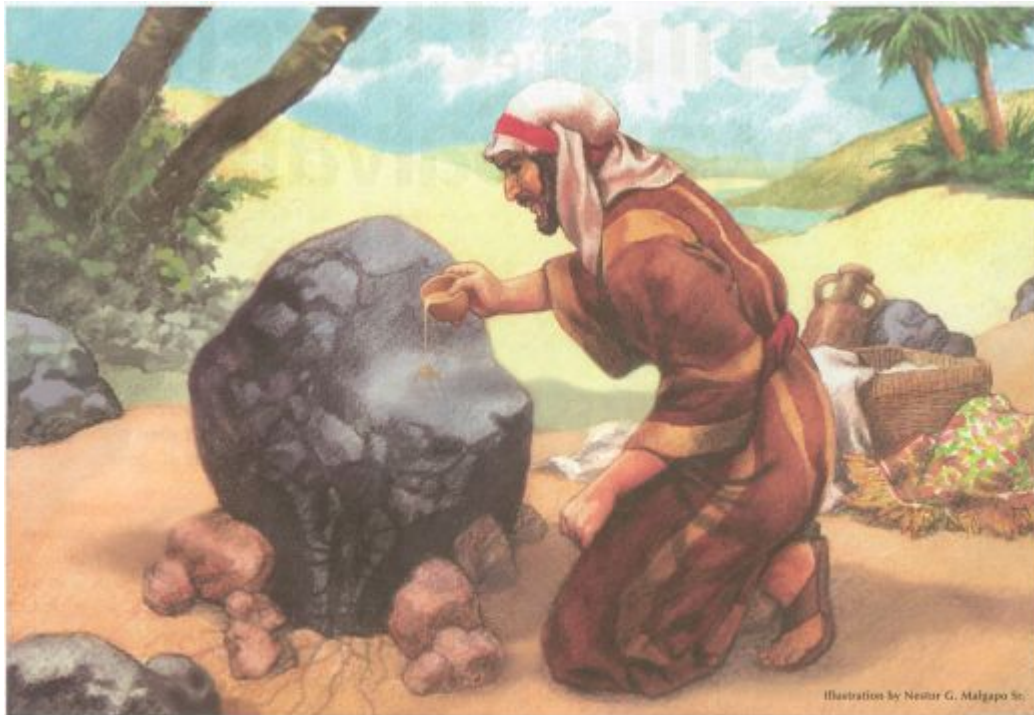


“this place”

Question: What is the difference between the Holy Land and other lands? "He who dwells outside Israel is like one who has no יהוה" (Kesubos 110b) -- so dramatic is the difference in holiness between the Land and the rest of the world. *Chumash*

Genesis 28:18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning and took **את** the stone that he had used to lay his head and set **אתה** it (*her*) up as a pillar and poured oil upon the top of it. 19 And he called **את** the name of that place Bethel (*House of El*): but the name of that city was called Luz (*to grow*). 20 And Jacob vowed a vow saying, If Elohim will be with me and will keep me in the way that I am going and will give me bread to eat and garments to put on, 21 So that I can come again to my father's house in peace; then יהוה will be my Elohim: 22 And **הזאת** this stone which I have set as a pillar will be Elohim's house and all that you give me I will give a tenth back to you. C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob only ask for bread, clothes, and protection? The righteous man only asks for necessities; they have no need for luxuries. *Chumash*



Jacob sets up a pillar

Question: “I will give a tenth back to you.” Of what things should you give a tenth? The money you earn and also contribute your time to the service of worthy causes. Jacob's tithe included not only a tenth of earnings, but also his pledge to dedicate a tenth of his children to יהוה's service. Specifically, this was the tribe of Levi, which was consecrated to serve יהוה, and to whom Jacob imparted the mysterious teachings and wisdom of the Torah (Bereishis Rabbah 70:7). *Chumash*

Question: Where was Esau at this time? And in those days, in the land of Canaan, there was a quarrel between the herdsmen of Esau and the herdsmen of the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, for Esau's cattle and goods were too abundant for him to remain in the land of Canaan, in his father's house, and the land of Canaan could not bear him on account of his cattle. And when Esau saw that his quarreling increased with the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, he rose up and took his wives and his sons and his daughters, and all belonging to him, and the cattle which he possessed, and all his property that he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and he went away from the inhabitants of the land to the land of Seir, and Esau and all belonging to him dwelt in the land of Seir. But from time to time Esau would go and see his father and mother in the land of Canaan, and Esau intermarried with the Horites, and he gave his daughters to the sons of Seir, the Horite. And he gave his elder daughter Marzith to Anah, the son of Zebeon, his wife's brother, and Puith he gave to Azar, the son of Bilhan the Horite; and Esau dwelt in the mountain, he and his children, and they were fruitful and multiplied. (Jashar)

Genesis 29:1 Then Jacob went on his journey and came into the land of the people of the east. 2 And he looked and saw a well in the field and there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; and out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone *was* upon the wells mouth. C-MATS

Question: Who met their mates at a well? Jacob met Rachel, Moses met Zipporah, and Eliezer found Rebekah for Isaac at a well. *Chumash*



Jacob Meets Rachel

Genesis 29:3 And when all the flocks were gathered: they rolled **את** the stone from the wells mouth and watered **את** the sheep and *then they* put back again **את** the stone in its place upon the wells mouth. 4 And Jacob said to them, My brothers, where *are* **אתם** you from? And they said, We *are* from Haran. 5 And he said to them, *Do* you know **את** Laban, the son of Nahor? And they said, We know *him*. 6 And he said to them, *Is* he well? And they said, *He is* well: and Rachel his daughter is coming with the sheep. 7 And he said, Look *there is* still plenty of daylight and *is it* not time for the cattle to be gathered together: water the sheep and go *and feed them*. 8 And they said, We cannot *water them* until all the flocks are gathered together and until they roll **את** the stone from the wells mouth; *and* then we *can* water the sheep. 9 And while he still spoke with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: because she kept *the sheep for her father*. C-MATS

Question: What do we learn about Rachel in this verse? Rachel tended the flocks alone, because Laban had no sons and no other shepherdess. Leah was not with her, so she must have been in charge of household chores. Rachel was leading the flock alone, which indicates that the flock was small. Rachel must have been a skilled shepherd to single-handedly tend even a small flock of sheep. *Chumash*

Genesis 29:10 And when saw Jacob את Rachel, the daughter of Laban, his mother's brother, את and the sheep of Laban, his mother's brother, Jacob went over and rolled את the stone from the wells mouth and watered את the flock of Laban, his mother's brother. C-MATS

Question: Why is the phrase “of Laban his mother's brother” used three times in one verse? Everything Jacob did for Laban's flock was in honor of his mother, Rebekah. He announced this fact to the shepherds at every turn, so that they would not accuse him of have immoral intentions toward Rachel. *Chumash*



Jacob rolls away the stone

Question: Why did they all wait to roll the stone from the well's mouth? The stone was huge and needed all the effort of the shepherds. *Chumash*

Question: What do we learn about Jacob from this event? The Torah narrates this incident at length to illustrate how those **that wait upon יהיה** will **renew their strength**. [Isaiah 40:31]. For though Jacob was weary from his long journey, he was able to roll away the stone unassisted, a task that usually required the combined effort of all the shepherds. *Chumash*



Question: Was Rachel one of the covenant women? Concerning the name Rachel which is used a total of 40 times in the Tanakh, the **את** is used only 5 times in front of her name starting in Genesis 29:10 when Jacob sees Rachel for the first time; Genesis 29:18 when Jacob confesses his love for her and commits to work for Laban for 7 years to earn her hand in marriage; Genesis 29:28 when Rachel is finally given to him in marriage; Genesis 29:30 when Rachel sleeps with Jacob for the first time; Genesis 30:22 when Elohim remembers Rachel and opens her womb for the first time. Though Rachel's name is used another 26 times there is never another **את** in front of her name after she steals Laban's idols, not even when she conceives or gives birth to Benjamin. Special attention should be noticed that the **את** is also used in place of Rachel's name, such as in Genesis 29:21 where Jacob says to Laban, give me **את** my wife. Also in Genesis 29:27 where Laban says to Jacob complete *the week with Leah* and we will give you *Rachel* also **את** for serving me another seven more years...the text actually reads, *complete the week and we will give you also את for serving me another seven more years*. C-MATS

Genesis 29:11 And Jacob kissed Rachel and lifted up את his voice and wept. C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob weep? Since he came empty-handed, he said, "Eliezer, my grandfather's servant, had nose rings, and bracelets and sweet fruits in his possession, and I am coming with nothing in my hands." *Chumash*

Question: How old was Rachel when she met Jacob? She was fourteen years old when Jacob came to her father's house; consequently she was twenty-one years old at the time of her marriage to Jacob (Seder 'Olam Rabbah ii.). *Chumash*



Genesis 29:12 And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her father's relative and that he *was* Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father. 13 After heard Laban **את** *the* news of Jacob, his sister's son, Laban ran **לקראתו** *to meet him* and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. And Jacob told Laban **את** *all these things*. C-MATS

Question: Why did Laban run to Jacob? Laban reasoned: Eliezer was but an unimportant member of Abraham's household, yet he came with ten camels laden with gifts; how much more then this man, who is the beloved of his home! But when he did not even see his wallet, "he embraced him," thinking: perhaps he has money in his girdle. On finding nothing at all, "he kissed him," thinking: he may have precious stones, which he is hiding in his mouth. Said Jacob to him, "What do you think that I come laden with wealth? I have come laden with nothing but words," and so, "He told Laban all these things." *Chumash*

Question: And Jacob told Laban **את** *all these things*. What did Jacob tell Laban? And Jacob related to Laban what his brother Esau had done to him (tired to kill him), and what his son Eliphaz had done to him in the road, taking all his possessions. *Chumash*

Question: What important mission brought Jacob to Haran? Jacob had come to Haran to find his mate, but to a Patriarch of Israel this meant more than merely finding the woman with whom he would build a family. Jacob was the last of the Patriarchs, the one to whom, as he knew prophetically, would be born the twelve tribal fathers, and the one who would begin the process of changing **יהודה**'s people from a family to a nation. His wife had to be a woman ordained for this dignified calling, and for her sake ordinary materialistic considerations fell by the wayside. Rachel was that mate, and Jacob devoted seven years of hard physical toil to win the right to marry her. *Chumash*



William Dyce - The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel, Est. £100,000 – 150,000 - Photo: Sotheby's

Jacob Meets Rachel at the Well (19th Century painting by William Dyce)

Genesis 29:14 And Laban said to him, *from my bone and my flesh, are אַתָּה you.* And Jacob lived with him about a month. C-MATS

Question: Why did Laban take Jacob into this house? “In view of this, I have no reason to take you into the house, because you have nothing. Because of kinship, however, I will put up with you for a month’s time.” And so he did, but this too was not free, for Jacob pastured his sheep. Laban made Jacob the head shepherd, since Rebekah was Laban’s sister. *Chumash*

Genesis 29:15 And Laban said to Jacob, Because אַתָּה you are my brother, should you serve me for nothing? Tell me what *do you want your wages to be?* 16 And Laban *had* two daughters: the name of the older one *was* Leah and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. 17 Leah *was* tender eyed (*hearted*); but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. C-MATS



Tell me what *do you want your wages to be?*

Question: What does it mean that “**Leah was tender eyed (hearted)**”? Leah was tender, because she wept constantly in prayer that she not have to marry Esau. People used to say that since Rebecca has two sons and Laban two daughters, the elder daughter would be married to the elder son, while the younger daughter was destined to marry the younger son (Rashi). Great is prayer, for Leah's prayer brought about annulment of the decree that she marry Esau, and even allowed her to be the first to marry Jacob and have children with him (Midrash). *Chumash*

Genesis 29:18 And loved Jacob **אתה** Rachel and he said, I will serve you seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter. **19** And Laban said, *It is better that I give **אתה** her to you than give **אתה** her to another man: stay with me.* **20** And Jacob served *Laban* seven years for Rachel; and they seemed to him *but a few days, because of the love he had for **אתה** her.* C-MATS



Laban's daughters – Leah & Rachel

Question: What did Laban make Jacob do before he could marry Rachel? Jacob found out that before he could marry Rachel, the woman he loved, he would have to work for her cruel father, Laban, for seven long years. Yet the Torah reveals to us that Jacob felt so motivated by the goal of marrying Rachel that the work only felt to him as if it took a few days!

Question: How does being motivated with a goal help a person to get more done, and have more fun? Human beings naturally strive to have meaning in their lives and in the things they do. Nothing energizes a person more than a sense of purpose, and nothing weakens him more than a feeling of purposelessness. Having a goal in mind infuses a given activity with meaning, which in turn allows a person to enjoy what he's doing and succeed.

Question: Are all goals created equal? Does it make a difference what motivates a person as long as he's motivated? Life is more than just accomplishing whatever goal you set your mind to. We live in a meaning-filled world with **יהוה**-given spiritual values. A criminal may be very motivated, but that doesn't put him on the same level as, say, a sincerely motivated special-ed teacher. The first step is to figure out which goals are truly worth striving toward, and then using them to motivate yourself to the max. What goals have **יהוה** set for you? What is His purpose for you?

Spiritual Exercise: Make a goal for yourself this week and work hard to complete it.

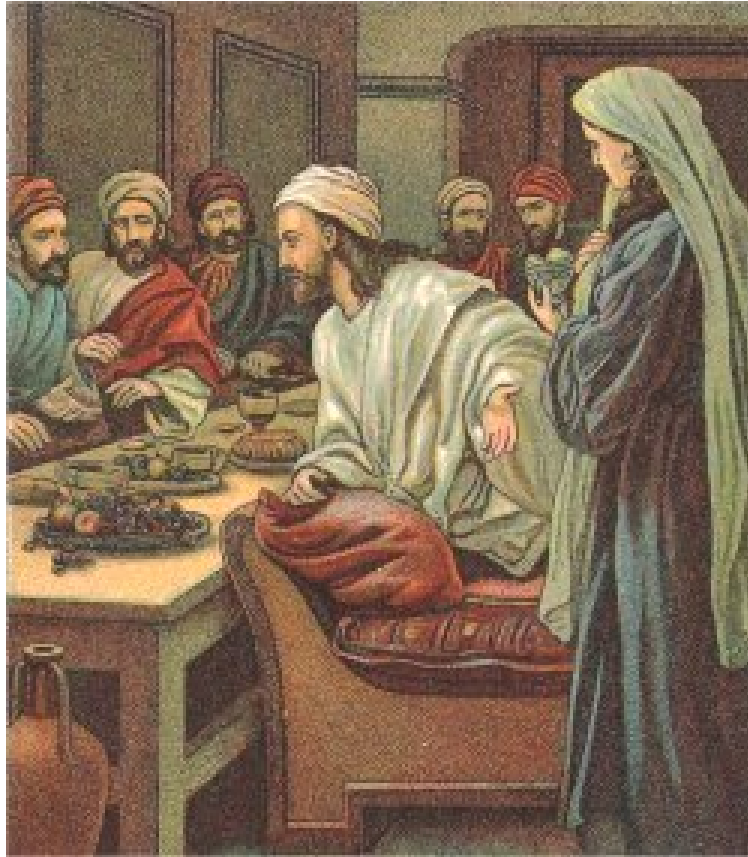


Jacob kisses Rachel

Question: What happened after Jacob had been at Laban's house for 4 years? And in the fourth year of Jacob's residence in the house of Laban, יהוה visited Laban and remembered him on account of Jacob, and sons were born unto him for the first time. And יהוה gave Laban riches and honor, sons and daughters, and the man increased greatly on account of Jacob. (Josephus)

Genesis 29:21 And Jacob said to Laban, Give me **את** my wife, because I have completed my days.
C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob have to go to Laban and ask for Rachel? After seven years, Laban said nothing. Jacob was forced to approach Laban to remind him of the arrangement. Jacob was already 84 years old and he had to begin his mission of bringing the twelve tribes into the world. His concern was to serve יהוה, not physical pleasure. *Chumash*



Now it is time to marry Rachel

Genesis 29:22 And gathered together Laban אֶת־ all the men of the place and made a feast. **23** In the evening Laban took אֶת־ Leah his daughter and brought אֹתָהּ her to him; and Jacob slept with her. **24** And gave Laban to אֶת־ Zilpah, his maid, to Leah his daughter for a maidservant. **25** In the morning, Jacob realized that it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is אֵת־ this you have done to me; didn't I serve you for Rachel? Why then have your deceived me? C-MATS

Question: Did all the men of the city know about Laban's plan to deceive Jacob? And in the evening Laban came to the house, and afterward Jacob came there with the people of the feast, and Laban extinguished all the lights that were there in the house. And Jacob said unto Laban, "Why did you do this thing to us?" Laban answered, "Such is our custom to act in this land." And afterward Laban took his daughter Leah, and he brought her to Jacob, and he came to her and Jacob did not know that she was Leah. And all the people at the feast knew what Laban had done to Jacob, but they did not tell the thing to Jacob. And all the neighbors came that night to Jacob's house, and they ate and drank and rejoiced, and played before Leah upon timbrels, and with dances, and they responded before Jacob, *Heleah, Heleah*. And Jacob heard their words but did not understand their meaning, but he thought such might be their custom in this land. And the neighbors spoke these words before Jacob during the night, and all the lights that were in the house Laban had that night extinguished. And in the morning, when daylight appeared, Jacob turned to his wife and he saw, and behold it was Leah that had been lying in his bosom, and Jacob said, "Behold now I know what the neighbors said last night, *Heleah*, they said, and I knew it not." (Jashar)



Leah pretends to be Rachel

Question: Some equate embarrassing someone to actually killing them. How do you understand this rather extreme-sounding comparison? A major part of a person's identity is his sense of self-respect. By humiliating someone, one actually robs him of this identity. He may remain physically alive but his self-respect - which is his human essence - has been temporarily murdered. For the moment, the person feels dead. The reason why a person blushes when embarrassed is because his blood is being spilt. The very comparison should breed within us a sensitivity and respect for the feelings of others.

Question: Is 'wounding someone's pride' really wounding him? Since it's not an apparent, physical wound, we can easily feel that it's nothing so serious. However, embarrassment and wounded pride are in a way even deeper, crueler and less healable than physical wounds.

Question: If someone embarrasses us, how should we respond? Certainly, taking revenge and embarrassing him back won't make things better. A healthy response would be to remain silent and to remind ourselves of the inherent dignity we each possess - despite others' denial of it - as human beings and creations of יהוה.

Question: Was Jacob angry with Leah for deceiving him? All that night, Leah was impersonating Rachel. When Jacob woke in the morning and saw that she was Leah, he said to her: "Daughter of The Deceiver! Why have you deceived me?" Said she to him: "And you, did you not deceive your father, when he asked you, 'Are you my son Esau?'" *Chumash*

Question: How could the righteous man Jacob be deceived knowing that Laban was dishonest? Laban's plan would not have succeeded unless יהוה had allowed it to happen. It is illogical to believe that Jacob could not have detected something amiss until the morning. יהוה's plan required that Jacob and Leah become husband and wife-in fact, in a real sense, she became the primary wife, because she had as many sons as Jacob's three other wives combined and she, not Rachel, was buried with Jacob in the Cave of Machpelah. Rachel produced Joseph, who would save his family from famine, but Leah produced Levi and Judah, the tribes of priesthood and the Davidic Messianic monarchy. On the wedding night, Jacob's acute spiritual antenna recognized that he was with the partner who was destined for him and that is why he detected nothing wrong. *Chumash*

Question: If everything that happens is directed by יהוה for our benefit, does that mean that nothing is bad? From a human perspective there are definitely things which seem to be good and others which appear to be bad. יהוה has planted those perceptions within us, and definitely wants us to pursue that which is 'good', and distance ourselves from that which is 'bad.' The Torah, and its many guidelines, is in fact an instruction manual of how to do just that. However, in a deeper sense, part of us has to always remember that 'bad' is in essence only a disguised type of 'good', and that whatever happens, to trust in יהוה, and believe that someday the good hidden within it will be revealed.

Question: How can a person develop his powers of seeing יהוה's guiding hand in our lives, and accepting things when they don't go the way he hoped they would, despite our best efforts? One powerful and life-enhancing tool is to keep a journal listing one event each day where we are able to see a purposeful and beneficial 'coincidence' that has happened to us. The truth is they are not merely coincidences, but יהוה's way of speaking with and letting us know He's here. At first they may be difficult to spot, but if you persist you will begin to see them more and more, and be amazed at how your life is being planned and guided every step of the way.

Spiritual Exercise: Start a journal listing all the miracles and answered prayers that יהוה has done for you.

Genesis 29:26 And Laban said, *It is not the custom in our country to give the younger daughter in marriage before the firstborn.* 27 Fulfill her week **זאת** *this* and we will give you also **את** (*Rachel*) **זאת** *this* for serving me yet another seven more years. C-MATS

Question: Why did Laban want Jacob to wait one week before he gave Rachel to him? This was the seven days of feasting celebrated by a newly wedded couple. *Chumash*



Rachel weds

Genesis 29:28 And Jacob did so and fulfilled *the* week: **את־** *this* and he (*Laban*) gave him **את־** Rachel his daughter *as a wife also*. 29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter **את־** Bilhah, his maidservant, *to be her maid*. 30 And Jacob slept *with* Rachel also and he loved also **את־** Rachel more than Leah and served Laban seven more years. C-MATS

Question: Did Jacob change his manner of working after Laban deceived him? Just as he worked for him during the first years faithfully, so Jacob also worked for him during the other years faithfully, although Laban had dealt with him deceitfully. *Chumash*

Genesis 29:31 And when **יהוה** saw that Leah *was* hated (*not loved*), he opened **את־** her womb: but Rachel *was* barren. C-MATS

Question: The Matriarchs were barren, because **יהוה** desires the prayers of the righteous. Presumably Leah would be included in this group, yet she began to give birth as soon as she was married! Why did this happen? **יהוה** saw Leah's predicament, as the less favored wife, so **יהוה** had mercy on her. **יהוה** knew that Leah needed a son to console her, since Jacob's love for her was still lacking. Otherwise, Judgment would have dictated that she, like Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel, would have been barren until her prayers succeeded in changing her nature. *Chumash*

Question: Did Jacob really hate Leah? Jacob surely loved Leah, but that his greater love for Rachel made her seem unloved or even hated by comparison. *Chumash*

Genesis 29:32 And Leah conceived and gave birth to a son and she called his name Reuben (*a son*): she said, Certainly יהוה has looked upon my affliction; now my husband will love me. C-MATS

Question: What sign did יהוה give to Jacob that he was suppose to marry Leah? Even though Jacob resented Leah's complying with Laban's plot to deceive him at the time of the wedding. Now that יהוה had approved Leah's conduct by giving her the first child, Jacob would surely realize that Leah had acted properly and followed יהוה's plan for him. *Chumash*

Genesis 29:33 And she conceived again and gave birth to a son; and said, Because יהוה has heard that I was hated (*not loved*), He has given me also אה- this son and she called his name Simeon (*hated*). 34 And she conceived again and gave birth to a son; and said, Now this time my husband will be joined to me, because I have given him three sons: so his name was called Levi (*loved*). C-MATS

Question: Why did Leah say, "Now this time my husband will be joined to me, because I have given him three sons"? A woman who has one child carries it on her arm; when she has two children, both her arms are full; when her third child is born, her husband has no choice but to help her out. *Chumash*



Rachel and Leah

Genesis 29:35 And she conceived again and gave birth *to* a son: and she said, Now I will praise אֶת־יהוָה: so she called his name Judah (*praise*); and she ceased bearing. **Genesis 30:1** And when Rachel saw that she gave Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said to Jacob, Give me children or else I *will die*. C-MATS

Question: Why did Rachel envy her sister? She envied her good deeds. She said, “If she had not been more righteous than I, she would not have merited children.” *Chumash*

Question: Why did Rachel go to Jacob? She wanted Jacob to pray for her, “Did your father not do that for your mother? Did he not pray for her?” *Chumash*

Question: What did Rachel mean by “else I *will die*”? From here we learn that whoever has no children is counted as dead. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:2 And Jacob was very angry with Rachel: and he said, *Am I* in Elohim’s place who has withheld *children* from you? C-MATS

Question: Why was Jacob angry with Rachel? You say that I should do as my father did and pray for you, but I am not like my father. My father had no sons at the time he prayed, but I have sons. It is thus apparent that He has withheld children from you, not from me. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:3 And she said, Sleep with my maid Bilhah, so you may also have children by her, who can be laid on my knees. C-MATS

Question: What does it mean “be laid on my knees”? She will bear children that she can raise for herself. *Chumash*

Question: What is the meaning of “also”? She said to him, “Your grandfather Abraham had sons from Hagar; yet he prayed fervently on Sarah’s behalf.” He replied, “My grandmother Sarah brought her rival into her house.” She said, “If this matter is preventing me from having children, here is my maidservant as Sarah was built up by Hagar.” *Chumash*

Genesis 30:4 And she gave him אֶת־בִּלְהָה Bilhah, her maidservant, *as a wife*: and Jacob *slept with her*. 5 And Bilhah conceived and gave birth to a son *for* Jacob. 6 And Rachel said, Elohim has judged me and has also heard my voice and has given me a son: so she called his name Dan (*vindicated*). 7 And Bilhah, Rachel’s maid, conceived again and gave birth *to* Jacob a second son. 8 And Rachel said, I have wrestled with my sister and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali (*struggle/prevail*). 9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, so she took אֶת־זִלְפָּה Zilpah, her maid and gave אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה her *to* Jacob *as a wife*. 10 And Zilpah, Leah’s maid, gave birth to a son *for* Jacob. 11 And Leah said, *Here comes a troop (good/fortunate) and she called אֶת־גָּד* his name Gad. 12 And Zilpah Leah’s maid gave birth *to* Jacob a second son. 13 And Leah said, Happy am I, because the daughters will call me blessed: and she called אֶת־אָשֵׁר his name Asher (*happy/joyful*). 14 And Reuben went *out* in the days of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought אֶת־הַמַּנְדְּרָקִים them *to* his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, please, your son’s mandrakes. C-MATS



Mandrakes

Question: What are **mandrakes**? Mandrakes, along with woody nightshade, deadly nightshade, and henbane, belong to the same family as the potato, eggplant, and tomato. Mandrake's medicinal uses date back to ancient times, with references to it being used as a cure to sterility in *Genesis* 3:14-16 and in the time of Pliny (23-79 C.E.) it was being given to patients before surgery by having them chew on pieces of root (Blakemore and Jennett 2001). The root can be very toxic, but also is used as an adnodyne to relieve and soothe pain (by lessening the sensitivity of the brain or nervous system) and for its soporific properties (inducing sleep). It historically also has been used as emetic (induces vomiting) and purgative (induce bowel movements) (Blakemore and Jennett 2001). From ancient times, the root was promoted for such uses as an aphrodisiac and for fertility. Dioscorides, a Greek physician of the first century, described how a wine made from mandrake produces anesthesia, noting it can be used for those who cannot sleep, or have severe pain, or are being cauterized or cut, with the use of it resulting in that they will not feel pain (Peduto 2001).

Mandrake was used magically as an aphrodisiac and a fertility charm for a thousand years. Much of the mandrake's occult power is associated with the humanoid form of its root. It is the mandrake root that gave rise to the plant's sexual associations: The root is disproportionately large in relation to the visible plant and bears a striking resemblance to the human male anatomy. The mandrake's Hebrew name, *duda'im* shares a root with the word for beloved, *dodi*. **Song of Songs 7:13 The mandrakes give forth fragrance; and at our doors are all manner of precious fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved. C-MATS**



Reuben finds the mandrakes

Question: Why was Reuben searching for mandrakes? Mandrakes were supposed to induce fertility. Reuben knew that his mother Leah wanted to have more children and he wanted to please her, which showed his devotion to his mother. This was the same devotion that pushed him to move Jacob's bed into Leah's tent. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:15 And she said to her, *Isn't it enough that you have taken **את** my husband? Would you take away also **את** mandrakes from my son? And Rachel said, Jacob will lie with you to night if you give me your son's mandrakes.* C-MATS

Question: Was this exchange considered a sinful exchange in יהוה's eyes? Leah and Rachel each had their own rooms, and Jacob alternated between them. That night Jacob was to have stayed with Rachel, but she ceded the privilege to Leah in exchange for the mandrakes. Rachel looked towards the mandrakes to bring conception, not to יהוה and his perfect timing. Because Rachel made light of being with the righteous man, she was not privileged to be buried with him. It would have been demeaning for both sisters to be buried with Jacob, because the Torah would later forbid the marriage of two sisters to the same man. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening and Leah went out לקראתו **אתו** to meet him and said, You must come lay with me; because I have hired you with my son's mandrakes. And he laid with her that night. **17** And Elohim listened to Leah and she conceived and gave birth to a fifth son for Jacob. C-MATS

Question: Why did Leah conceive again? The Torah stresses that יהוה responded to her prayers, not that there was some magical power in the mandrakes. Children are a gift of יהוה.

Question: Jacob's family may have had their differences, but they were still a family. What do you think is the difference between our connection to our family and our connection to our friends? While friendships are valuable and can be a lot of fun, they can never replace our family. A family tie is something very deep and while friendships come and go, our family is a part of us for life.

Question: What, if anything, do you think a person could gain by making efforts to stay close and connected with his family? A family is a support system. Even if we don't always get along, being connected to people who share our genes, physical and spiritual, can be a great source of strength.

Question: What do you think a person who feels embarrassed or uncomfortable about his family could tell himself to handle it better? He should remember that his family is not just some random group of people he ended up with, but they are the people that יהוה has especially chosen for him to be close with during his life. They are a big part of his identity and the more he accepts them for who they are the more he will accept himself.

Genesis 30:18 And Leah said, Elohim has given me my reward, because I have given my maid servant to my husband: and she called his name Issachar (*hire, reward, wages*). **19** And Leah conceived again and gave birth to a sixth son for Jacob. **20** And Leah said, Elohim has given אתי **אתי** me a wonderful gift; now my husband will live with me, because I have given him six sons: and she called את **את** his name Zebulun (*live/habitat*). **21** And then Leah gave birth to a daughter and called את **את** her name Dinah (*the bride/justice*). **22** And remembered Elohim את **את** Rachel and Elohim listened to her and opened את **את** her womb. **23** And she conceived and gave birth to a son; and said, Has taken away Elohim את **את** my reproach: **24** And she called את **את** his name Joseph (*may he add*); and said, יהוה will add to me another son. C-MATS

Question: On what day was Joseph born? He was born on Rosh Hashanah, "head of the year", the Day of Remembrance. יהוה remembered the fervent prayers of Rachel and removed her disgrace. *Chumash*

Question: Why did Rachel ask for only one more son? Rachel knew through prophecy that Jacob was destined to establish only twelve tribes. She said, "May it be His will that the one he is destined to establish be from me." Therefore, she prayed that יהוה have mercy on her for only another son and no more. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:25 And it came to pass, when gave birth Rachel to **את** Joseph that Jacob said to Laban, Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26 Give me **את** my wives **ואת** and my children, for whom I have served **אתך** you and let me go: because **אתה** you know **את** my faithful service that I have given to you. C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob ask to leave Laban? At that time Jacob's mother, Rebecca, sent her nurse Deborah the daughter of Uz, and two of Isaac's servants unto Jacob. And they came to Jacob to Haran and they said unto him, "Rebecca has sent us to thee that thou shall return to thy father's house to the land of Canaan" and Jacob listened to them in this, which his mother had spoken. And when the servants of Isaac whom he had sent unto Jacob saw that Jacob would not then return with them to the land of Canaan to his father, they then went away from him, and they returned home to the land of Canaan. Deborah remained with Jacob in Haran, and she did not return with the servants of Isaac to the land of Canaan, and Deborah resided with Jacob's wives and children in Haran. (Jashar)

Genesis 30:27 And Laban said to him, Please, if **מצאתי** I found grace in your eyes, listen: because I have learned by experience (enchantment/magic) that **יהוה** has blessed me because of you. C-MATS

Question: What was Laban saying to Jacob? I determined with my divination that a blessing came to me through you. When you came here, I had no sons, and now I have sons. *Chumash*

Genesis 30:28 And Laban said, Name me your wages and I will give it to you. 29 And he said to him, **אתה** You know **את** how I have served you **ואת** and how your cattle were cared **אתי** by me. 30 For you had little before I came and it has now increased to a multitude; and **יהוה** has blessed **אתך** you since my coming: when will I provide for my own household? 31 And he said, What **אתן** shall I give you? And Jacob said, You will give me *nothing*: if you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flock. 32 I will pass through all your flock today removing from it all the speckled, spotted and brown sheep and the spotted and speckled goats: and these shall be my wages. 33 I will let my righteousness stand for me as a witness, when it comes time for my wages, every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and brown among the sheep will be counted stolen **אתי** by me. C-MATS

Question: Was this a fair agreement? The arrangement was entirely to Laban's advantage, but **יהוה** turned it around to Jacob's advantage so he was greatly blessed. *Chumash*

Discuss: What should you do if you find yourself in a place where someone is taking advantage of you? Can **יהוה** turn that situation around?

Question: What was the profession of most of the prophets? Being a shepherd is a most desirable profession, seeing that all the prophets occupied themselves with it. Regarding Jacob it is written, "I will again feed and keep your flock" (Genesis 30:31); regarding Moses it is written, "Now Moses kept the **את** flock of Jethro his father-in-law" (Exodus 3:1); regarding David it is written, "He chose David also His servant and took Him from the sheepfolds." (Psalms 78:70); regarding Amos it is written, "I was a herdsman" (Amos 7:14). *Chumash*



Jacob with the Flock of Laban, 1638, Jusepe de Ribera

Genesis 30:34 And Laban said, I agree *that* it will be according to *what you have said*. **35** And he removed that day אֶת־ the he goats that were striped and spotted אֶת־ and all the female goats that were speckled and spotted and every one that *had some white in it* and all the brown among the sheep and gave *them* to his sons. **36** And *Laban* set three days journey between himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed אֶת־ flocks, the rest of Laban's flocks. C-MATS

Question: What flocks did Laban give Jacob? Laban assumed that the pure white and pure black animals left with Jacob would bear only a trifling percentage of discolored young. Jacob would get to keep only the discolored sheep that were born by these solid colored sheep. Laban gave Jacob only the weakest among them, the sick and the barren, which are only leftovers. *Chumash*

Question: How did Jacob treat Laban after he changed his wages so many times? Jacob spent 20 miserable years working for Laban, the deceiver. This wicked man tried every trick in the book to cheat Jacob out of everything that was rightfully coming to him. Yet we learn that not only did Jacob never try to cheat Laban back, but he went out of his way to be super-honest with every little detail of his job.

Question: Is there a difference whether one steals from an individual or a large corporation, a rich man or a poor man, a large amount or a small, etc.? On the one hand, it certainly would hurt a poor person if his life savings were stolen more than it would hurt a billion dollar corporation to lose a pencil. But there really is no true difference. Stealing is wrong regardless of the effect it has on the one stolen from. The Torah prohibits the act of stealing whether it is from a poor man or a rich man. One who refrains from stealing elevates himself spiritually; one who steals lowers himself. Whether the one stolen from is hurt or not isn't really relevant.

Question: Can there be a type of theft when nothing physical is stolen? The Torah refers to a type of stealing called geneivat da-at literally "stealing someone's mind" as a form of theft. This is describing deceit, when one person fools another by concealing his true intentions. An example of this would be going into a store and pretending to be interested in buying something when one really has no intention to do so. There is also a concept of "stealing sleep," if one is noisy when someone else is trying to sleep, he's actually stealing sleep from the other person. The Torah guides us how to grow very sensitive to others in ways we may never have imagined.

Question: Is it okay not to tell the truth? Although truthfulness is a primary value, in certain cases, where speaking truthfully would embarrass another, cause a quarrel, or appear to be bragging one should remain silent rather than tell the truth or speak the truth in love and compassion.

Question: What attitude do you think could help someone who wanted to start living in a straighter, truthful way? One reason people feel they must manipulate and deceive others is that they fear that without doing so they will somehow lose out on getting what they want and need. However we should know that whatever comes our way is only because יהוה makes it happen and as יהוה wants us to be truthful we can rest assured that ultimately He will see to it that playing it straight will bring us the best possible good.

Genesis 30:37 And Jacob took rods from the green poplar, hazel (*almond*) and chestnut (*sycamore*) tree; and made white *streaks* on them by *peeling off the bark*. **38** And he set אֵת the rods, which he had *peeled* before the flocks in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, so that they would conceive when they came to drink. **39** And the flocks conceived before the rods and *gave birth to* striped, speckled and spotted cattle. **40** And Jacob separated the lambs and *had the animals mate with* the striped and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them *with* Laban's cattle. **41** And it came to pass, whenever the stronger cattle wanted to mate, laid Jacob אֵת the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the *watering troughs*, so that they might conceive among the rods. **42** But when the cattle were feeble, he did not put *them in front of* the rods: so the feebler *cattle* were Laban's and the stronger *cattle* were Jacob's. **43** And *Jacob* increased exceedingly and had much cattle and female servants and menservants and camels and donkeys. C-MATS



Striped, speckled and spotted cattle

Question: What method did Jacob use to breed his sheep, so they “*gave birth to striped, speckled and spotted cattle*”? Even the white sheep that Laban gave Jacob had enough recessive black genes to produce enough black rams to undertake a selective breeding program. After fourteen years of working with sheep, Jacob must have understood the importance of using rams with the desired characteristics to pass on these characteristics to some of the lambs. What Jacob had to ensure was that the white rams did not mate with any of the ewes, and equally that the initially few black rams, produced by the first years free breeding, served all the ewes. A single ram in modern farming serves between thirty and fifty ewes, so Jacob would have no real problem in providing enough black rams to serve his flock. Jacob isolated the white rams and weak black rams to prevent them from getting at the ewes, by building an enclosure using a fence made of “**rods from the green poplar, hazel (*almond*) and chestnut (*sycamore*) tree**”. The biblical account emphasizes that the significance of the tree branches was at the actual mating, rather than during the pregnancies. This program would produce a flock of predominantly black animals in a period of five years. In the period of six years in which the flock was in Jacob’s keeping, Jacob would acquire most of Laban’s flock. (John Pearson, Professor in the Department of Electronic and Electrical Engineering at the University of Salford)

Question: How wealthy was Jacob? And Jacob had two hundred droves of cattle, and his cattle were of large size and of beautiful appearance and were very productive, and all the families of the sons of men desired to get some of the cattle of Jacob, for they were exceedingly prosperous. And many of the sons of men came to acquire some of Jacob's flock, and Jacob gave them a sheep for a manservant or a maidservant or for an ass or a camel, or whatever Jacob desired from them they gave him. And Jacob obtained riches and honor and possessions by means of these transactions with the sons of men, and the children of Laban envied him of this honor. (Jashar)

Genesis 31:1 And he heard **את** the words of Laban’s sons saying, Has taken away Jacob **את** all that was our fathers; and he has gotten **את** all this glory (*wealth*) from that which our father has. **2** And looked Jacob **את** the countenance (*face*) of Laban and saw that it was not *favorable* towards him as before. **3** And **יהוה** said to Jacob, Return to the land of your fathers and to your kinsmen; and I will be with you. And Jacob called Rachel and Leah *to him in the field of his flock*. C-MATS

Question: What was **יהוה** saying to Jacob? And there **I will be with you**, but as long as you are still attached to the unclean one, it is impossible to cause My Presence to rest upon you. Chumash

Question: What did **יהוה** require of Jacob? **יהוה**’s tests are always calibrated to correspond to the strength of the person being tested. Jacob was asked to obey **יהוה**’s voice the first time he spoke to him. This implies how closely Jacob walked to **יהוה**. *Chumash*

Question: Why does scripture place Rachel before Leah when Jacob married Leah and then Rachel? Rachel was the mainstay of the household, because, on her account, Jacob had joined Laban. Even Leah’s children acknowledged this matter, for Boaz and his tribunal of the tribe of Judah say, “**like Rachel and like Leah, which did build together את House of Israel**.” (Ruth 4:11). They always place Rachel before Leah. *Chumash*

Genesis 31:5 And said to them, See I **את** the countenance (face) of your father that it is not favorable towards me as before; but the Elohim of my father has been with me. 6 And you know that with all my power I have served **את** your father. 7 And your father has deceived me and changed **את** my wages ten times; but Elohim allowed him not to hurt me. 8 If he said, The speckled will be your wages; then all the cattle gave birth to speckled cattle: and if he said, The striped will be your wages; then they gave birth to all the striped cattle. 9 So has taken away Elohim **את** the cattle of your father and given them to me. 10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream that the rams, which mated with the cattle, were striped, speckled and gray-spotted. C-MATS

Question: How did יהוה reveal to Jacob how to mate his flocks so יהוה could bless him bountifully? יהוה spoke to him in a dream. *Chumash*

Genesis 31:11 And the Angel of Elohim spoke to me in a dream saying, Jacob: And I said, Here I am. 12 And He said, Lift your eyes up now and see all the rams which mate with the cattle are striped, speckled and gray-spotted: because **ראיתי את** I saw all that Laban does to you. 13 I am the Elohim of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you vowed a vow to Me, now arise and get out of **הָאָרֶץ** this land and return to the land of your kinsmen. 14 And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, Is there still any portion of the inheritance for us in our father's house? 15 Are we not counted as strangers? He has sold us and has also devoured **את** our money. C-MATS

Question: Why did Rachel and Leah feel that they were treated as strangers in their father, Laban's house? They said, "Even at a time when people usually give a dowry to their daughters at the time of marriage, Laban behaved toward us as one behaves toward strangers, for he sold us to you (for you served him fourteen years for us, and he gave us to you only) as wages for labor." *Chumash*

Genesis 31:16 All the riches, which Elohim has taken from our father, are now ours and our children's; so whatever Elohim said to you to do, then do it. 17 Then Jacob rose up and set **את** his sons **ואת** and his wives upon camels. 18 And he carried away **את** all his cattle **ואת** and all his possessions which he had gained, the cattle he acquired, which he had gained in Padan-aram and went to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan. C-MATS

Question: How many years was Jacob away from his parents? Jacob was away from his parents for a total of 36 years, 20 years of serving Laban and two years of journeying. Jacob was neglectful because he failed to return home to visit his parents. Jacob's punishment was that Joseph remained separated from Jacob for a like number of years. *Chumash*

Discuss: Are you always paid back for your sins in the same way that you treat others?

Genesis 31:19 And Laban went to shear **את** his sheep: and had stolen, Rachel, **את** the images that were her fathers. 20 And left Jacob **את** secretly from Laban, the Syrian, so that he did not know that he had fled. C-MATS

Question: What did Jacob assume would happen when he left? Jacob assumed that יהוה would prevent Laban from learning about his departure. As had often happened in the history of יהוה's people, יהוה did not act as people wanted Him to. Laban pursued and caught Jacob and wanted to kill him, but יהוה saved Jacob and proved Himself faithful. *Chumash*



Jacob left Laban

Genesis 31:21 So he fled with all that he *had*; and he rose up and passed over **את** the river and set **את** his face *toward* Mount Gilead (*hill of testimony*). **22** And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. **23** And took Laban **את** his brothers with him and pursued him for seven days; and they overtook **אתו** *him* in Mount Gilead. **24** And Elohim came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream at night and said to him, Be careful not to speak to Jacob either good or bad. C-MATS

Question: What did יהוה mean by “either good or bad”? יהוה did not want Laban to offer Jacob anything good in order to entice him to return or to threaten him with harm if he failed to do so. *Chumash*

Genesis 31:25 Then overtook Laban **את** Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched **את** his tent on the mount; and Laban pitched *with* **את** his brothers on the Mount of Gilead. C-MATS



The sites of Penuel and Mahanaim, where Jacob was stopped by Laban during his return journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan, have long been identified with two sites in north-central Jordan, Tulul Eddahab El-Gharbi and Tulul Eddahab El-Sharqi (the eastern and western hills of gold).

Genesis 31:26 And Laban said to Jacob, What have you done? You have *fled* away אֶת־ secretly from me and carried away אֶת־ my daughters *like* captives taken with the sword. 27 Why did you flee away secretly and deceive אֶת־ me; and you did not tell me, so that I might have sent you away with *joy* and with the *music* of tambourines and harps? 28 And have not *allowed* me to kiss my sons and my daughters and you have now *acted* foolishly by doing *so*. 29 It is in the power of my hand to do you harm: but the Elohim of your father spoke to me last night saying, Be careful not to *say anything* to Jacob whether good or bad. 30 And now, *I understand* that you need to leave, because you *deeply* long for your father's house, but why have you stolen אֶת־ my gods? 31 And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because יָרֵאתִי אֶת־ *I feared*: and אָמַרְתִּי אֶת־ *I said* that you *might* take by force אֶת־ your daughters from me. 32 With whomever you find אֶת־ your gods, let him *die*: before our brothers find what *is* yours and mine and take *it* with you. Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. 33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into *the* two female servant's tents; but he did not find *them*. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered into Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken אֶת־ the images and put them in the camel's *saddle* and sat upon them. And searched Laban אֶת־ all the tents, but *he* did not find *them*. 35 And Rachel said to her father, Do not be displeased, my master, that I cannot rise up before you; because the manner of women *is* upon me. And he searched, but *did* not find אֶת־ the images. C-MATS



Jacob and Laban, 1737 by Jean Restout II

Question: What curse did Jacob place on Rachel? **With whomever you find אהי your gods, let him die.** Jacob passed judgment on Rachel for stealing the idols. *Chumash*

Question: What were these images that Rachel took from Laban? Rachel took the images of the gods, although Jacob had taught her to despise such worship of those gods. And this is the manner of the images; in taking a man who is the first born and slaying him by cutting off his head and cutting the hair off his head, and taking salt and salting the head and anointing it in oil, then taking a small tablet of copper or a tablet of gold and writing the name (of the dead man) upon it, and placing the tablet under his tongue (of the dead man), and taking the head with the tablet under the tongue and putting it in the house, and lighting up lights before it and bowing down to it. And at the time when they bow down to it, it spoke to them in all matters that they ask of it, through the power of the name, which is written in it. And some make them in the figures of men, of gold and silver, and go to them in times known to them, and the figures receive the influence of the stars, and tell them future things, and in this manner were the images which Rachel stole from her father. And Rachel stole these images, which were her father's, in order that Laban might not know through them where Jacob had gone. (Jashar)



Rachel steals Laban's idols

Genesis 31:36 And Jacob was angry with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass, what is **אִשְׁטִי** my sin that you have so hotly pursued me? **37** You have searched **אֵל** all my stuff, have **אֵלְמָצְרָה** you found any of your household goods? Set it here before my brothers and your brothers that they may judge between us both. **38** For twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young and the rams of your flock **אֶכְלֵהוּ** I ate not. **39** Those of your flock which were torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I covered the loss myself; from my hand did you require it, whether stolen by day or night. **40** In the day the drought (heat) consumed me and the frost by night; and sleep departed from my eyes. **41** So I have been twenty years in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your cattle: and you have changed **אֵל** my wages ten times. C-MATS

Question: Did Laban treat Jacob fairly? If any animal was missing from the flocks or herds, Laban would take that animal from Jacob's flocks or herds. If wild animals took from Laban's flocks or herds, Jacob would have to make up for the loss with his own flocks or herds. Jacob worked in the heat by day and the frost by night and still Laban would change the agreement between them from speckled to spotted and from ringed to striped. Laban continued to change the agreement over ten times. Yet יהוה continued to bless Jacob in spite of Laban. *Chumash*

Genesis 31:42 Except the Elohim of my father, the Elohim of Abraham and the fear of Isaac, had *not* been with me, surely now empty handed you would have sent me away **אֶת־** my affliction **אֶת־** and the labor of my hands Elohim has seen and rebuked you last night. **43** And Laban answered and said to Jacob, *These* daughters are my daughters and these children *are* my children and these cattle *are* my cattle and all that **אֵת־** you see *is* mine: and what can I do this day *about* my daughters or their children, which they have born? **44** Now come and let us make a covenant, you and me; and let it be a witness between me and you. **45** And Jacob took a stone and set it up *for* a pillar. C-MATS



A WATCHTOWER IN AN OLIVE GROVE / VINEYARD

Genesis 31:46 And Jacob said to his brothers, Gather stones; and they took stones and made a heap: and they ate there by the heap of stones. **47** And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha (*heap of stones for a testimony or memorial*) but Jacob called it Galeed (*witness pile*). **48** And Laban said, *This heap of stones is a witness between me and you this day. Therefore, the name of it was called Galeed.* **49** And Mizpah (*the watchtower*); because he said, יהוה watches between me and you, when we are absent one from another. C-MATS

Question: What does “Mizpah” mean? Watchtower. The pile of stones was a big, conspicuous structure on the mountain. It was not a mound or pillar. *Chumash*

Genesis 31:50 If you afflict **את** my daughters, or if you take *other* wives beside my daughters, *even if no man is there with us*; but Elohim is witness between me and you. C-MATS

Question: Why did Laban say “daughters” twice? Bilhah and Zilpah were also his daughters from a concubine. *Chumash*

Question: What did he mean by “afflict **את** my daughters”? Laban did not want Jacob to take away their rights as a wife to him or take additional wives. *Chumash*



The Reconciliation of Jacob and Laban (17th Century painting by Ciro Ferri)

Genesis 31:51 And Laban said to Jacob, See this heap of stones and see *this* pillar, which I have set up between me and you. **52** This heap of stones will be a witness and this pillar will be a witness, that I will not pass over your **את** heap of stones and that **אתה** you will not pass over my **את** heap of stones **את** *this* **את** and pillar, to cause harm. **53** The Elohim of Abraham and the god of Nahor, the god of their father, judge between us. And Jacob swore by the *One that his father Isaac feared*. **54** Then Jacob offered a sacrifice upon the mount and called his brothers to eat bread: and they ate bread and *rested all night at the mount*. **55** And early in the morning Laban rose up and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them: and Laban departed and returned to his place. **Genesis 32:1** And Jacob went on his way and the angels of Elohim *came to meet him*. C-MATS

Question: Who were these angels who came to meet Jacob? They were angels who minister in Israel. They came to meet him to accompany Jacob to the Holy Land, replacing the angels that had been with him outside the Land. This reversed the changing of the angelic guard that took place when he left Israel to go to Haran [28:12] (Midrash; Rashi). *Chumash*

Genesis 32:2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, *This is Elohim's camp: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim (two camps).* C-MATS

Question: Why did Jacob call the place "*two camps*"? There were two camps of angels: those angels who ministered outside the Land of Israel who had accompanied him while in Haran, and those angels of the Land of Israel who now came to meet him. *Chumash*

Genesis 32:3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother in the land of Seir, the country of Edom. C-MATS

Do You Know?

1. Jacob dreamed he saw ____ going up and down a ladder.
2. Jacob saw his vision on Mt. ____, the gate to heaven.
3. Jacob met Rachel at a ____.
4. Jacob came to Laban's house with only a ____.
5. Laban agrees to give his daughter _____ as a wife for Jacob.
6. Jacob worked for Rachel for ____ years.
7. Jacob worked as a _____ for his uncle Laban.
8. Laban deceived Jacob, and he married the eldest daughter _____ first.
9. Joseph worked for Laban ____ more years for Rachel.
10. Leah's first son
11. Leah had ____ sons.
12. Rachel wanted Leah's ____ so she could become fertile.
13. Rachel's first son
14. Leah's daughter
15. Jacob worked for ____ years for his flocks.
16. Jacob worked a total of ____ years for Laban.
17. Jacob was away from his parents for ____ years.
18. ____ stole Laban's household idols.
19. Laban and Jacob made a covenant between them using a pile of ____ called Watchtower.
20. ____ came to meet Jacob when he returned to the Holy Land.

Answers:

1. angels
2. Moriah
3. well
4. staff
5. Rachel
6. seven
7. shepherd
8. Leah
9. seven
10. Reuben
11. six
12. mandrakes
13. Joseph
14. Dinah
15. six
16. twenty
17. 36
18. Rachel
19. stones
20. angels

Haftorah

This week's *Haftorah* mentions Jacob's flight from home to the "field of Aram," an episode that is recounted in this week's Torah reading. The *Haftorah* begins with the prophet Hosea's rebuke of the Hebrew people for forsaking יהוה. Nevertheless, Hosea assures the people that יהוה will not abandon them. The prophet discusses the misdeeds of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the future degeneration of the Kingdom of Judea. He contrasts their behavior to that of their forefather Jacob who was faithful to יהוה and prevailed against enemies, both human and angelic. The *Haftorah* also makes mention of the ingathering of the exiles, which will occur during the Final Redemption.

Hosea 12:12 And Jacob fled *into the* country of Syria and Israel served for a wife and for a wife he kept *sheep*. 13 And by a prophet (*Moses*) brought את־יהוה Israel out of Egypt and by a prophet was he (*Israel*) cared for (*preserved*). 14 Ephraim provoked Him to anger most bitterly: therefore, he will leave his blood upon him and Adonai will return his reproach to him. Hosea 13:1 When Ephraim spoke, *men* trembled, he exalted *himself* in Israel; but when he offended in Baal *worship*, he died. 2 And now they sin more and more and have made them molten images of their silver and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. 3 Therefore, they will be as the morning cloud and as the early dew that passes away, as the chaff *that* is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor and as the smoke out of the chimney. 4 Yet I *am* יהוה your Elohim from the land of Egypt and you will know no Elohim but Me: for there is no savior except Me. C-MATS

Hosea 13:5 I did know you in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. 6 According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled and their heart was exalted; therefore, have they forgotten Me. 7 Therefore, I will be to them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe *them*: 8 I will meet them as a bear *that is bereaved of her whelps* and will rip open the breast of their heart and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast will tear them. 9 O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help. 10 I will be your king: where *is any other* that may save you in all your cities? And your judges of whom אַמְרָתָהּ *you said*, Give me a king and princes? 11 אֲתָן *I gave you* a king in My anger and took him away in My wrath. 12 The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; חַטָּאתוֹ *his sin is hid*. 13 The sorrows of a travailing woman will come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children. 14 I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be your plagues; O grave, I will be your destruction: repentance will be hid from My eyes. *Prophecy Fulfilled-Hos. 13:14 He would defeat death-1 Cor. 15:55-57.* 15 Though he is fruitful among *his* brothers, an east wind will come, the wind of יְהוּה will come up from the wilderness and his spring will become dry and his fountain will be dried up: he will spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels. 16 Samaria will become desolate; for she has rebelled against her Elohim: they will fall by the sword: their infants will be dashed in pieces and their women with child will be ripped open. Hosea 14:1 O Israel, return to יְהוּה your Elohim; for you have fallen by your iniquity. 2 Take with you words and turn to יְהוּה: say to Him, take away all iniquity and receive *us* graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. 3 Asshur will not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we anymore to the work of our hands, You are our gods: for in you the fatherless finds mercy. 4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for My anger is turned away from him. 5 I will be as the dew to Israel: he will grow as the lily and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. 6 His branches will spread and his beauty will be as the olive tree and his smell as Lebanon. 7 They that live under his shadow will return; they will revive *as the* corn and grow as the vine: the scent of it *will be* as the wine of Lebanon. 8 Ephraim *will say*, what have I *to do* anymore with idols? I have heard *him* and observed him: I *am* like a green fir-tree. From Me is your fruit found. 9 Who *is* wise and he will understand these *things*? Prudent and he will know them? For the ways of יְהוּה *are* right and the just will walk in them: but the transgressors will fall in it. C-MATS

Brit Chadashah

John 1:43 The day following Yahusha would go forth into Galilee, and finds Philip, and said to him, **Follow me.** 44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip finds Nathanael, and said to him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the Torah, and the prophets, did write, Yahusha of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. 46 And Nathanael said to him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, Come and see. 47 Yahusha saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, **Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!** 48 Nathanael said to him, How do you know me? Yahusha answered and said to him, **Before that Philip called you, when you was under the fig tree, I saw you.** 49 Nathanael answered and said to him, Rabbi, you are the Son of Elohim; you are the King of Israel. 50 Yahusha answered and said to him, **Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, believe you? You shall see greater things than these.** 51 And he said to him, **Hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of Elohim ascending and descending upon the Son of man.** C-MATS

Question: How should we react when things don't go the way we want them to? Our forefather Jacob carefully planned and worked very hard to marry the beautiful Rachel. Despite all this, he ended up getting tricked into first marrying her older sister, Leah. Despite his disappointment, Jacob accepted what happened as being יהוה's will, and though it seemed bad, it ended up being very good, as Leah became the mother of six out of Jacob's 12 sons and played a big part in helping him reach his life's goal of building the Hebrew people. We can learn from here a valuable lesson: We should do what we can to make things work out the way we would like them to, but if they don't, we should know that it isn't just a 'bad break,' but rather it is יהוה's way of giving us something good that we didn't realize we needed.

"SILVER LININGS"

What a disaster! We had been planning this thing for weeks, and now I felt like I was watching all my hard work and careful plans going up in smoke before my very eyes. Unlike a lot of kids I knew, I never went on vacations or did anything exciting during school break. I was so tired of watching all my friends flying off to here and there and coming back all tanned, and full of stories and souvenirs about their great times, when usually all I had at the end of school break was a couple of boring novels under my belt, and maybe a few extra pounds I gained from all the ice cream I ate while reading them. But this year was different. It wasn't easy, but I had convinced my parents to let my sister, Jenny, and I to fly down south and spend the break with our cousins, the Silvers, who lived by a beautiful beach. After about a hundred phone calls and arrangements, Jenny and I finally worked out all the details. I could hardly wait for the school semester to end, to say good-bye to the boring winter blues and trade them in for ten full days of fun in the sun. Everything was going along as planned, until about a week before the trip, when my aunt called. She was so apologetic and said when she told us we could stay with them, she hadn't realized my uncle had already invited friends to come for the very same days. Boy was I disappointed! What rotten luck! I started tearfully unpacking, and I didn't know how I would possibly break the bad news to Jenny. She had worked even harder on arranging the trip and was even more excited than I was. With my own tears barely dry, I slowly walked into Jenny's room, carrying a box of Kleenex. I figured she would need them for her tears once I told her the bad news. But I couldn't believe it the way she took it. Though I could tell she was disappointed, she just took it all in stride and said it must be for the best, and if we were meant to get there, we would. That was the last thing I expected, or wanted to hear. I'm embarrassed to say it, but I kind of got into a big fit and accused her of not being normal - after all, wouldn't any normal person be as upset as I was over something like this? Not wanting to give up, we racked our brains to come up with another plan, and sure enough Jenny came up with a brilliant idea. She remembered from the time we visited our cousins when we were little kids that there was a small motel literally across the street from their condominium complex. The words had barely left her mouth when I jumped on the phone to ask my aunt about it. Success! My aunt thought it was a great idea and said we could sleep at the motel, but spend our days and eat all of our meals with them. She even offered to pay for part of the motel since she felt so bad about the mix up. I teased Jenny about her take-it-or-leave-it attitude, and told her that if you wanted something to happen, you had to *make* it happen. (I guess I sort of conveniently forgot that the motel was *her* idea and not mine.) My sister just smiled and said, "Paula, if יהוה wants us to get there, we will. And if not, there is a good reason for that too." I thought she was all wet, but had too much re-packing to do to even bother arguing with her.

Things were looking up - until a couple of hours later when my aunt called back. It seemed the motel was all booked up! I was sure this time Jenny would get as down about it as I was, but again she just shrugged and said, "If יהוה isn't letting us take this vacation after trying so hard, there must be a good reason." I just rolled my eyes and went back to my room to have a good cry. Winter break arrived and I was getting ready for ten days of absolute boredom - all my friends had packed up and gone south to the sun, and here we were, stuck at home again. A couple of days later Jenny and I were sitting in the kitchen having lunch, and I was in the middle of telling her how all wet she and her 'everything's for the best' philosophy was, when the phone rang. Jenny picked it up. It was Tanya, one of the kids in our class who had taken off on vacation. I assumed she was calling from down south to gloat about how good a time she was having. "Really?" Jenny said. "That's too bad." My ears perked up. "Hurricane warning... Airport was closed?" Hey what was going on? Jenny hung up the phone and shook her head. "You're not going to believe it," she said. Turns out that a big unexpected storm had totally closed up that part of the southern coast. All our friends who flew there just had to turn around and fly right back home - if they were lucky. If they couldn't fly back in time, they got stuck spending their break far away from home in the middle of a hurricane! Talk about being 'all wet!' Boy, I never felt happier to be home, safe and dry in my life. I looked at Jenny, and she at me with a look that said it all. She had really been right all along; the whole time I thought יהוה was trying to stop us from having a good time, He was really stopping us from getting into an annoying and maybe even dangerous mess! I think from now on I'm going to try to be a little more like my smart sister, and not get upset so fast if things don't turn out the way I think they should, because you really never know.

Question: Which of the two sisters do you think had the right attitude? Why? It is understandable how Paula felt, as it is easy to focus on our disappointment when things don't work out like we planned. But, Jenny's attitude of acceptance was much better in the long run.

Question: Was Paula right when she said, "If you want something to happen you have to make it happen"? Yes and no. יהוה put us in the world and gave us the power to choose what we want. He also wants us to make a real effort to reach the goals we choose. But ultimately our efforts are only going to succeed if יהוה decides to 'let' them, and He is the only one who decides whether something is going to happen or not.

Resources: "Weekly Torah Portion" from www.aish.com

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures C-MATS www.AlephTavScriptures.com

The Book of Jashar. Joshua 10:13 So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar.

Antiquities of the Jews by Josephus