

Cong. Etz Chaim's
Torah at the Table
Parshat Yayeitzei

This parsha deals with Yaakov running away from home, and heading to the house of Lavan, where he will be for quite some time. Rashi asks, why must we be told of his departure from Be'er Sheva? Just tell us where he was going! He answers that when a righteous person makes an impression, and when the righteous person leaves, the "honor" and "light" leave as well.

Have you ever encountered a righteous person who made a positive impact on you just by being there? If so, what qualities did they have that made you feel different?

During Yaakov's dream, Hashem tells him that his descendants will be as widespread as the dust of the earth, and will be spread out (ufaratzta) to the west, east, north and south. The Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l spoke many times about this word "ufaratzta." He said that it means spreading forth without limits, breaking down barriers, even those that are good. For example, extending beyond one's fixed time for learning, giving more charity than the law requires, etc.

What areas of Jewish life do you go "above and beyond" in? Which areas do you not? What drives those choices?

Leah's fourth son is named Yehuda. Leah names him this because "this time let me gratefully praise [Odeh] Hashem." His name is rooted in the word "Todah," thanks. The Jewish people are called Yehudim for this exact reason. We must always be grateful to Hashem for all that He gives us, recognize it, and express that thanks.

There is a famous saying "What if you only woke up today with what you thanked G-d for yesterday?" What would you wake up with? What things in your life do you take for granted, and how can you start to change that?