## Chomer Lidrush

*Some ideas to turn your gears heading into Parshas Vayeitzei.*

**Uprooting with an Embrace** *(Guest entry from R' Moshe Stavsky)*

At the Seder we say that "*Lavan bikesh la'akor es hakol*," and Rashi (Devarim 26:5) identifies that attempt in Lavan's pursuit of Yaakov.

Writing in a guest post for us, R' Moshe Stavsky brings an alternative he heard from his rebbe, R' Yosef Adler z"l, in the name of R' Zvi Kanotopsky z"l: Lavan's real threat was not the chase but the covenant at the end of the parsha. Lavan, who still sees Yaakov's wives and children as partly his own, wants a treaty that keeps the families together, while Yaakov recasts it as a treaty of separation.

R' Kanotopsky sees the difference in the names (31:47). Lavan calls the heap *Yegar Sahadusa*, a gathering that testifies to two families gathered into one, and Yaakov calls it *Gal-ed*, a mound standing as a barrier between them. Lavan swears by the God of Avraham and the god of Nachor together, while Yaakov swears only "*b'Fachad aviv Yitzchak*" (31:53).

Had Lavan managed to fuse the families, he would have uprooted everything without raising a hand.

R' Stavsky carries this into our world of fully merged, undifferentiated identities, where the danger is assimilation rather than annihilation, and recalls the Lubavitcher Rebbe asking Yitzchak Rabin in 1972 whether Israel dwells alone by choice or by force. Both, the Rebbe answered, but "firstly it is a result of the Jewish people's own choice." We work alongside the world and gain from it, but Yaakov teaches that some boundaries are exactly what keep a family, and a people, alive.