BEREISHIT
NOAH
LEKH LEKHA
VAYERA
HAYYEI SARAH
TOLDOT
VAYEITZEI
VAYISHLAH
VAYEISHEV
MIKEITZ
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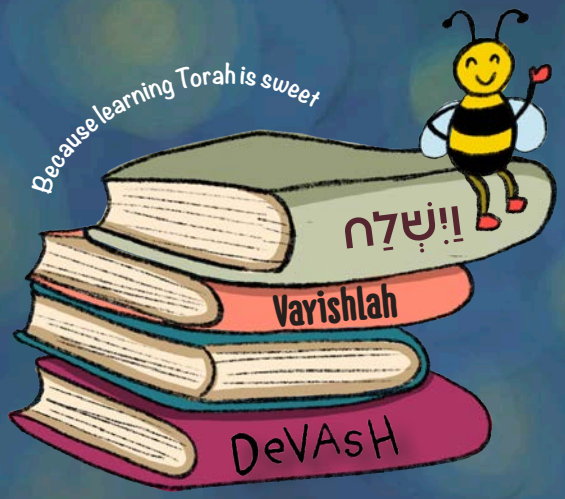

HADAR Children & Families
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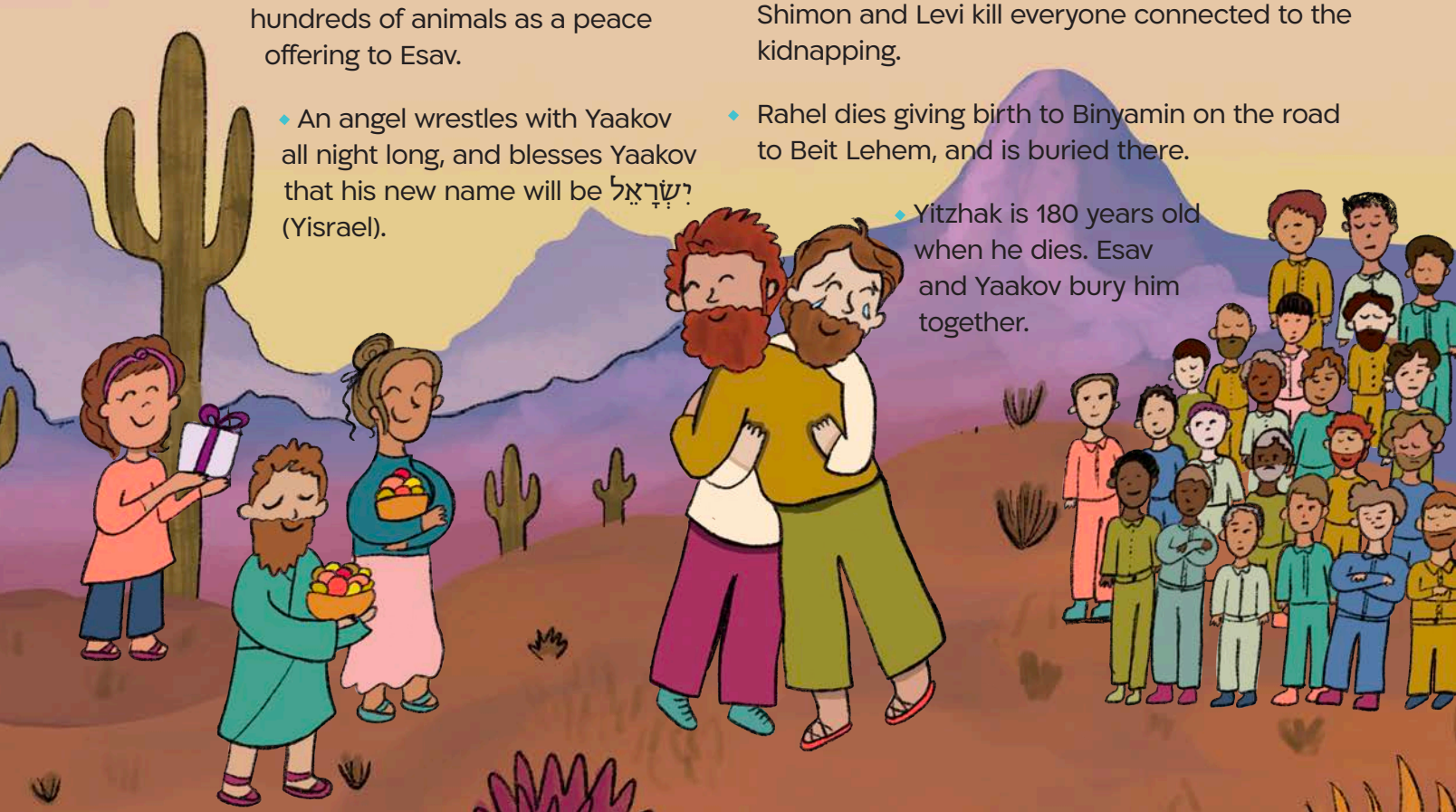
י"ג - י"ט כִּסְלֵו תשפ"ד November 26 - December 2, 2023

מָה בַּפָּרָשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

- Yaakov sends messengers to his brother, Esav, letting Esav know that Yaakov and his family are returning to אֶרֶץ כְּנַעַן (Eretz Canaan, the land of Canaan).
- The messengers tell Yaakov that Esav is coming to greet him with 400 men. Yaakov is scared Esav will kill him and his family, and he divides his family into two camps for protection, prays to God, and sends hundreds of animals as a peace offering to Esav.
- An angel wrestles with Yaakov all night long, and blesses Yaakov that his new name will be יִשְׂרָאֵל (Yisrael).
- Yaakov is injured in his גִּיד הַנָּשֶׁה (gid hanasheh, a part of the hip called the sciatic nerve). Therefore, the gid hanasheh of an animal is not kosher to eat.
- The next day, Yaakov continues with his family to meet Esav. Esav runs toward Yaakov and kisses him, and they cry.
- Dinah is kidnapped, and her brothers save her. Shimon and Levi kill everyone connected to the kidnapping.
- Rahel dies giving birth to Binyamin on the road to Beit Lehem, and is buried there.
- Yitzhak is 180 years old when he dies. Esav and Yaakov bury him together.



פֵּרוּשִׁים • Commentary

Bereishit 32:25

Yaakov was left alone, and an angel wrestled with him until the break of dawn.

בראשית לב:כה

וַיִּוָּתֵר יַעֲקֹב לְבַדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֵק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ עַד עֲלוֹת הַשָּׁחַר:

What's going on here? **Why is an angel fighting with Yaakov?!**

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Our Rabbis explained that this was Esav's angel.

רש"י

וּפֵרְשׁוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זִכְרוֹנָם לִבְרָכָה שֶׁהוּא שָׂרוֹ שֶׁל עֵשָׂו.

Based on a midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 77:3), Rashi suggests that this is not a friendly angel. It represents Esav, and this fight is part of the attack that Yaakov was afraid of all along.

- Can you find evidence for Rashi?
- When Yaakov and Esav finally meet (in Bereishit 32:4), Esav doesn't seem interested in killing Yaakov anymore. According to Rashi's interpretation, what might have changed?

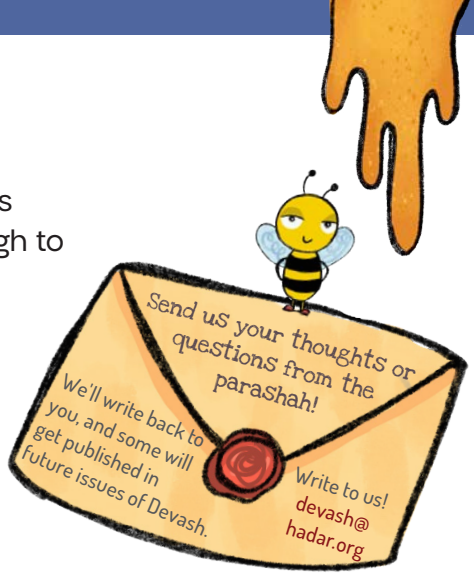
חזקוני

מַלְאָךְ בִּדְמוּת אִישׁ לְעַכְּבוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יוּכַל לִבְרֹחַ וְיִרְאֶה הוּא הַבְטָחוֹת הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁלֹּא יַזִּיקֵהוּ עֵשָׂו.

Hizkuni (France, 800 years ago)

It was an angel that looked like a person who came to delay Yaakov, so Yaakov couldn't run away. This way Yaakov would see the fulfillment of God's promise that Esav wouldn't harm him.

Hizkuni thinks this is for Yaakov's own good - the angel was sent by God to make sure Yaakov stuck around long enough to see how God would save him from Esav.



- Why might Yaakov have wanted to run away? What might he have been feeling?
- Why would it be important for Yaakov to survive by facing Esav and being saved by God instead of just running away? What makes one outcome different from the other?
- How does the story change if you look at it Rashi's way vs. Hizkuni's way? What does each interpretation add to your understanding of this encounter?

דַּקָּה שֶׁל דִּיּוּן • One-Minute Debate

Debate: Some fights will never end.

How to play:

- Here are some arguments to get you started, but try to come up with your own. Then debate someone!
- For a true one-minute debate, give each side 30 seconds to make its best case.

Disagree!

- It's always worth giving peace a shot!
- Even Esav and Yaakov seem to be able to get over their past and move forward. In the end, they have a peaceful meeting and are able to come together when their father, Yitzhak, dies.

Agree!

- Esav and Yaakov don't really move on that well. Esav's descendants became enemies of the Jewish people for a long time.
- Some disagreements can never be forgotten.

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שְׁאֵלוֹת הַשָּׁבוּעַ • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

aliyot:
1) Bereishit 32:3 to 32:12
2) 32:13 to 32:29
3) 32:30 to 33:5
4) 33:6 to 33:20
5) 34:1 to 35:11
6) 35:12 to 36:19
7) 36:20 to 36:43

haftarah: Ovadiah 1:1 to 1:21

The answers to the first seven questions can be found in the matching numbered aliyah in the Torah reading. The answers to questions 8 and 9 are harder and can come from anywhere in the parashah. The answer to question 10 is in this week's haftarah.

Good luck!

1. How many men were marching with Esav?
2. What did Yaakov demand from the angel?
3. What name does Yaakov give to the place where he wrestled with the angel?
4. What is Esav's home called?
5. What does Yaakov tell his family to get rid of?
6. Where was Rahel buried?
7. What king of Edom has the same name as a king of Israel?
8. Who in our parashah shares a name with an animal?
9. How many times does Yaakov find out that his name will become Yisrael?
10. **From the haftarah:** The Hebrew word פֶּרֶק (perek) often means "chapter." How does Ovadiah use this word?

* Look for the answers on page 8!

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מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Bereishit 35:8

Devorah, Rivkah's nurse, died.
She was buried under the oak outside Beit El.
They named it Alon Bakhut (Oak of Weeping).

בראשית לה:ח

וַתָּמָת דְּבֹרָה מֵינֶקֶת רִבְקָה
וַתִּקָּבֵר מִתַּחַת לְבֵית אֵל תַּחַת הָאַלּוֹן
וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ אַלּוֹן בָּכוּת:

Yaakov's family is traveling back to Canaan... and suddenly the Torah introduces a new character just when she dies! Who was Devorah, and why does she appear at this point in the journey?

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are **bugged** by something unusual in the Torah text

Rashi (quoting R. Moshe ha-Darshan) offers a backstory:

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

What's Devorah doing with Yaakov's family?

When Yaakov ran away, Rivkah promised him "One day I will send someone and fetch you from there" (Bereishit 27:45). Rivkah sent Devorah to Paddan Aram to bring Yaakov out of there, and then she died on their way back.

רש"י

מָה עִנְיַן דְּבוֹרָה בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב?

אֶלָּא לְפִי שֶׁאָמְרָה רִבְקָה לְיַעֲקֹב "וְשָׁלַחְתִּי וּלְקַחְתִּיךָ מִשָּׁם" (בראשית כז:מה), שָׁלְחָה דְבוֹרָה אֶצְלוֹ לְפַדַּן אֲרָם לָצֵאת מִשָּׁם, וּמֵתָה בַּדֶּרֶךְ.

- At this point Yaakov hadn't seen his mother in more than 20 years. How might he have felt when Devorah came with a message from his mother to come home?
- Devorah was Rivkah's nurse, and this means that she helped to raise Rivkah when she was young. Why would Rivkah send her nurse as her representative? What does this tell us about their connection?
- What kind of connection do you have to the people who aren't your parents, but help raise you?

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דִּקְדּוּק • Grammar

The name of this week's parashah, Vayishlah, is a word formed from the שֹׁרֶשׁ (shoresh, root) ש.ל.ח, which means to send.

"Vayishlah " describes Yaakov when he **sends** messengers to his brother, Esav, to see what Esav's intentions are. But earlier in the Torah we encountered a similar word: וַיְשַׁלַּח (vayshalah) which is used when Noah **sends** out the birds from the ark to see if the waters were still covering the earth after the flood (Bereishit 8:7-8).

What's the difference between these two words? If both mean "to send," why do they have different נְקוּדוֹת (nekudot, vowels)?

No dagesh in the lamed — Dagesh in the lamed

וַיִּשְׁלַח vs. וַיְשַׁלַּח

Sheva under the shin — Hirik under the yud — Patah under the shin — Sheva under the yud

These differences—especially the dagesh—are clear signs that the verb on the right is in the פִּעֵל (pi'el) form.

This different form of the verb often **strengthens** the word. In our case, the word וַיִּשְׁלַח (vayishlah) means to send something or someone away with the goal that they come back—like Yaakov's messengers. But the word וַיְשַׁלַּח (vayishalah) means to send something away forever, like when Noah sends away birds from the ark, hoping they will not return, which would be a sign that the land was dry.

Can you find any other examples of a pi'el verb in our parashah?

מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

Yaakov wrestles with an angel all night long, and he gets named Yisrael. Then the Torah tells us (Bereishit 32:32): וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ (the sun rose for him).

Bzzzz
A lot of midrashim are **bugged** by something unusual in the Torah text

Why does it say that the sun rose "for him"? When the sun rises, it's not doing a personal favor for anyone - it's just doing its thing!

Midrash Sekhel Tov

The Holy Blessed One had the sun set two hours early for Yaakov when he was leaving from his parents home. Now these hours were returned to him on his way back. That's why it says "rose for him" – the sun rose just for him two hours before its time.

מדרש שכל טוב

אוֹתָן שְׁתֵּי שָׁעוֹת שֶׁהִשְׁקִיעַ לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא בִּיצִיאָתוֹ מִבֵּית אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ הֶחֱזִירַתּוּ לוֹ בַּחֲזִירָתוֹ לְבֵית אָבִיו, לְכָךְ כְּתִיב "וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ" - זָרְחָה לוֹ ב' שָׁעוֹת בַּעֲבוּרוֹ קֹדֶם זְמַנָּהּ.

According to this midrash, God made a special kind of "daylight savings" miracle for Yaakov! This connects to another view of Hazal that God made the night come early for Yaakov so he would sleep in the special place where he dreamt of the ladder with angels going up and down it (Bereishit 28:11-22). Here, God brought the day a little early to make up for that lost sunlight.

- When Yaakov ran away from home because of Esav's threat to kill him, what could the extra long nighttime have symbolized? Why might that have been an "extra dark" time in his life?
- Now that Yaakov has faced Esav's angel and won (see Rashi on p.2), what could the extra daylight symbolize? Why might this be a time of "extra light" in Yaakov's life?

פֵּרוּשָׁנוּת • Commentary

How should we talk about our belongings?

At first Esav refuses to accept gifts from Yaakov, saying: יֶשׁ לִי רָב אָחִי (I have tons, my brother) (Bereishit 33:8).

And Yaakov tries to convince Esav to take the gifts:

Bereishit 33:11	**בראשית לג:יא**
"Please accept the present I brought you, for God has favored me and I have **everything**."	קַח נָא אֶת בִּרְכָתִי אֲשֶׁר הֻבָאת לָךְ כִּי חַנַּנִי אֱלֹקִים וְכִי יֶשׁ לִי **כֹּל**...

Rashi notices something specific about their language, and thinks there's a lesson in the way they speak:

Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)	**רש"י**
I have everything - all my needs are met.	יֶשׁ לִי כֹּל - כָּל סִפּוּקִי.
But Esav spoke with boasting, saying "I have tons" (33:8) - way more than I need.	וְעֵשָׂו דִּבֵּר בִּלְשׁוֹן גַּאֲוָה "יֶשׁ לִי רָב" - יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר מִכְּדֵי צָרְכִּי.

- According to Rashi, what tone of voice was Esav using in 33:8? And what tone of voice was Yaakov using in 33:11? Try reading these pesukim in their voices!
- What lesson does Rashi want us to learn about how to talk about the things we own and enjoy?
- Why is the way we talk about what we have so important? What is the difference between showing appreciation and bragging?

Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

1. 400 (32:7)
2. A blessing (32:26)
3. Peniel (32:31)
4. Seir (33:14)
5. Their foreign gods (35:2)
6. Beit Lehem (on the way to Efrat) (35:19)
7. Shaul (36:37)
8. חֲמוֹר (Hamor = donkey), the leader of the city of Shekhem; דְּבוֹרָה (Devorah = bee), Rivkah's nurse; and a special bonus: דִּישׁוֹן (Dishon = addax, a kind of antelope), an Edomite chief
9. Twice! Once from the angel (32:28) and once from God (35:10)
10. "Standing at the perek" (Ovadiah 1:14) means something like "standing at the crossroads"