

YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vayeitzei

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

Weely Video: No Room To Rationalize When The Evaluation Is Justice

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Emerging From The Nadir To Resurrection

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Vaporizing the Untenable to Assure the Perpetuity of Existence

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- 1. Yaakov leaves Beersheva to go to Charan.
- 2. Chazal: When a devoutly righteous person leaves a location, its splendor & beauty depart with him.
- 3. This is extrapolated from the words "Yaakov left Beersheva".
- 4. Although Yitzchok & Rifka remained his absence made its mark.
- 5. He fathered the twelve tribes; his absence was more greatly felt.
- 6. Was it that the 12 tribes were only a consequence of Yaakov's dimension?
- 7. Yaakov: "Man of The Tent (of Torah)"; was a personification of the Torah.
- 8. Midrash: Avraham was thrown into the fiery kiln: the heavenly angels objected to G-d's saving him.

- 9. "A man whose descendants are going to be evil how do you save him?"
- 10. G-d: He will have a grandson Yaakov in whose merit he will be saved.
- 11. Prophets: The house of Yaakov redeemed Avraham.
- 12. Gemara: "I've created an evil inclination; I've created Torah as its antidote."
- 13. Midrash: As long as the voice is the voice of Yaakov, the hands can not be the hands of Esav.
- 14. The counterbalance to Esav is Yaakov.
- 15. Yaakov will counter all of Avraham's evil descendants (Yishmael, Edom)
- 16. His absence was felt there because only he could counter the evil of Esav.



Yad Avraham Institute

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The Spiritualization of Torah

Torah: After Yaakov received the blessing from his father Yitzchak, Esav vowed to kill him. As the verse states, "Now Esav harbored hatred towards Yaakov because of the blessing... Esav thought, 'May the days of mourning for my father draw near, then I will kill my brother Yaakov." When Rivka became aware of Esav's intention she said to Yaakov, "....So now my son, heed my voice and arise; flee to my brother Lavan, to Charan and remain with him a short while until your brother's wrath subsides." Yaakov thus fled to the community of Lavan to escape from his brother Esav.

Yitzchak was instructed by Yaakov that he should go to the house of Besuel and take one of the daughters Lavan, as a wife. Seemingly, just as Eliezer when he was sent by Avraham, his master to locate a wife for Yitzchak, he had gone with great wealth to negotiate

for the hand of *Rivka*, so too was Yaakov given great wealth to be able to negotiate with *Lavan* for the hand of one of his daughters to be his wife. *Yitzchak* and *Rivka* appreciating the evil of *Lavan* and understood that it would be impossible for *Yaakov* to negotiate with *Lavan* without bringing great wealth. Had it not been for the great wealth that they had given to *Yaakov*, he would be forced to remain with *Lavan* for an extended period of time as payment for the hand of his wife.

Midrash: When Yaakov was fleeing to Charan, he was confronted by Elifaz, the son of Esav. He was sent by his father to kill Yaakov. When Elifaz came upon Yaakov he said to him, "I must kill you so that I may fulfill the mitzvah of honoring my father. Since my father Esav has sent me to kill you, I must do so." Yaakov said to him, "You had learned under the tutelage of your grandfather Yitzchak the principle that, 'One who is impoverished, is the equivalent of one who is dead.'

Therefore, take all of my wealth and you would have fulfilled your father's will."

Yaakov was thus left destitute, as is indicated from the verse, which states, "With my walking stick I crossed the Jordan." Because Yaakov had relinquished all the wealth that he had been given by his parents, he needed to work for Lavan for many years for the hand of his wives Rachel and Leah.

Elifaz returned to his father Esav and informed him that although Yaakov was still alive in Charan, he had taken all of his wealth and thus fulfilling the request of his father to take his life. Seemingly, Esav should have not been satisfied with Elifaz's explanation of why he did not actually kill Yaakov. If so, why did Esav, who had vowed to kill Yaakov for receiving the blessing, not journey to the house of Lavan his uncle to kill Yaakov?

Midrash in the introduction to Eichah explaining the words of Yitzchak: "The voice is the voice of Yaakov, and the hands are the hands of Esav..." The Midrash states, "...'When do we know that the Jewish people are vulnerable to destruction?' ...If the children and adults of Israel are studying Torah they cannot be destroyed due to the blessing of Yitzchak who had said, 'When the voice is the voice of Yaakov, the hands cannot be the hands of Esav...' However, if there are no chirpings (sounds of Torah study among the children) and the study halls are silent, then (G-d forbid) the hands will be the hands of Esav. Meaning, you can then destroy them.'"

Esav is only subordinated and incapacitated by Yaakov, as long as he maintains his level of spirituality through the study Torah and the observance of its mitzvos. However, if he should become spiritually diminished, the blessing that was given to Yaakov would be nullified and Esav would gain the upper hand to dominate Yaakov. In addition, the blessing that Yitzchak had given Yaakov was contingent on his worthiness because it was given within the context of the Attribute of Justice. If he would not be worthy, the blessing would revert to Esav.

Torah: Before Yaakov had come to the community of Charan, he prayed to G-d for protection. As it states, Yaakov said, "If G-d will be with me, will guard me on this way that I am going..."

Midrash: When Yaakov requested that G-d should safeguard him, he meant that G-d should protect him from the evil influences of Lavan and his community which were adultery, murder, idolatry, and evil speech (lashon hara). Esav was fully aware that Yaakov had come to the house of Lavan in an impoverished state. Due to his financial predicament, he would be forced to remain in an environment that was devoid of spirituality and exposed to a person who personified evil and depravity for an extended period.

Esav believed that with time, Yaakov's dimension of spirituality would erode and be diminished, thus rendering him unfit and unworthy of the blessing of their father Yitzchak. Therefore, there was no need for Esav to pursue Yaakov to kill him, because it was inevitable that Esav in time would regain the blessings of his birthright that were taken from him.

Torah: Yaakov was not diminished by the evil to which he was exposed even to the slightest degree and thus maintained his spiritual dimension.

Torah: After Yaakov had spent twenty years in the house of Lavan and had not seen his brother for thirty four years, he sent angels ahead of him to inform his brother Esav, "I have sojourned with Lavan and lingered until now – im Lavan gartie."

Rashi citing Chazal: The word "gartie" is the numerical equivalent of "taryag." Its numerical value is 613 which alludes to the 613 mitzvos. Yaakov was thus saying to Esav, his brother, that although he was exposed to Lavan and his community for this extended period of time, he had adhered to the entire Torah meticulously. In addition, he had communicated to Esav saying, "I did not learn from his evil ways."

Esav did not understand or appreciate the innate holiness of *Torah* and its effect, that it was able to insulate and protect *Yaakov* from being spiritually diminished to any degree. It is interesting to note, that the majority of the twelve tribes of Israel, who are referred to in Psalms as "the tribes of G-d (shiftei Ka)," were born to *Yaakov* while he was in the house of *Lavan*. The spiritual and insular environment that is provided by the *Torah* does not allow for anything that is contrary to spirituality to penetrate or influence. Because the *Torah* transcends and supersedes all physical limitations, *Yaakov* was able to accomplish in *Charan* the seemingly impossible.

Torah in Haazinu: "(Moshe said to the Jewish people)... It is not in heaven."

Rashi citing Chazal: "And if the Torah were in heaven, G-d would have provided ladders to the Jewish people to be able to ascend to the heavens in order to retrieve the Torah." Although it is humanly impossible to ascend to heaven, if it were necessary for the sake of Torah, G-d would have provided the means to bring about that necessary result.

Yitzchak our Patriarch Gave Permanence to Existence

Midrash citing a verse from Proverbs: "'The father of the righteous one shall rejoice. The one who gives birth to the wise one will rejoice with him.' To whom is King Solomon referring in this verse? It is to the birth of Yitzchak, our Patriarch. When Yitzchak was born everyone rejoiced. Heaven and earth rejoiced. The sun and the moon rejoiced. The stars and the zodiac rejoiced.

Why did all existence rejoice after the birth of *Yitzchak*? Had *Yitzchak* not been born, the world would have not continued. As the prophet *Yirmiya* states, 'If not for My covenant, which is in effect day and night, the extent of heaven and earth would not be put in place.' What is the covenant to which G-d is referring? It is *Yitzchak* – as it states in the *Torah*, 'My covenant I will establish with *Yitzchak*.'" What was unique and special about *Yitzchak* that he was worthy of this covenant?

Eitz Chaim (student of the Vilna Gaon): As great as Avraham was, he was still the son of an evil person, Terach. He was a tzaddik, the son of a rasha. However, Yitzchak, being the son of Avraham our Patriarch was a tzaddik the son of a tzaddik. He had no relevance to evil, since he personally was devoutly righteous and was born to one who was devoutly righteous. Therefore, Yitzchak was more worthy of his father Avraham in this regard.

Torah: "Yitzchak entreated G-d opposite his wife, because she was barren. G-d allowed Himself to be entreated by him, and his wife Rivka conceived." Although both Yitzchak and his wife supplicated G-d for a child since Rivka was barren, G-d responded to the supplication of Yitzchak and not Rivka. Why did He not respond to the prayer of Rivka?

Rashi citing Chazal: "The prayer of a tzaddik who is the son of a tzaddik has greater value (and thus not comparable) to the prayer of a tzaddik who is the child of a rasha (evil person)." Rivka is to be admired and praised as the Torah points out for being devoutly righteous despite the fact that her father, brother, and community were all evil. Although she came from such an evil background she merited to be the Matriarch of the Jewish people. Despite this, G-d did not respond to her prayers because she was still the daughter of an evil person whereas her husband Yitzchak was the son of a tzaddik. G-d distances Himself from having any level of association with something that has relevance to evil.

Chazal: There are classifications of people who have no relevance to G-d: liars, flatterers, and those who speak lashon hara... Since the signet of G-d is truth and these groups of people display the characteristic of falsehood, they have no relevance to Him.

It is interesting to note that *Yitzchak* was born as a result of a miracle. The *Torah* attests to the fact that *Sarah* our Matriarch was barren and was thus not able to conceive. It was only as a result of G-d's intervention that *Sarah* regained her youth and was able to conceive and give birth to *Yitzchak*. Not only was *Yitzchak* born the son of *Avraham*, who was a *tzaddik*, his conception was directly due to G-d's intervention to bring about his birth.

Midrash: "Reb Shimon bar Yochai says, 'G-d does not associate His name with the devoutly righteous (tzaddikim) during their lifetime. It is only after their passing, does He associate His Name with them... However, we do find that G-d associated His Name with Yitzchak, the righteous one while he was alive. As it is stated in the verse when G-d communicated to Yaakov He had said, 'Elokei Avraham Avicha v'Elokei Yitzchak – G-d of Avraham your father and G-d of Yitzchak (Avraham had already passed away, however Yitzchak was still alive).

"The Rabbis say that G-d sees (after the Akeidah), the ashes of Yitzchak piled upon the altar before Him (it is the equivalent of him not being alive, thus not subject to the evil inclination). Rav Brechiya says, 'It is because Yitzchak was blind (and confined to his home) that G-d associated His Name with him during his lifetime.' Thus, G-d associated His Name with Yitzchak during

his lifetime. (Each of these opinions is the basis for *Yitzchak* not being subject to the evil inclination)."

Chazal: Yitzchak in his essence was the equivalent of a consecrated sacrifice and thus G-d did not permit him from going out of the confines of the Land of Israel. It would have been similar to taking a sacrifice outside of the sanctuary of the Temple, which would invalidate it. Existence rejoiced with the birth of Yitzchak because he was the one who would ultimately father Yaakov, who was the most special of the Patriarchs.

Yaakov was the one who fathered the "tribes of G-d", which are the twelves tribes of Israel. If there would not have been a Yitzchak there would not have been a Yaakov in existence. Thus, there would not have been a Jewish people. Although Esav, the evil one was also fathered by Yitzchak, Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh explains that it was only due to Rivka being the sister of Lavan, the evil one that Esav came into being. As the Gemara states, "The majority of one's sons assume the characteristics of the mother's brothers." Every aspect of existence rejoiced with the birth of Yitzchak because ultimately through Yaakov his son the twelve tribes of Israel would fulfill the objective of Creation to receive the Torah at Sinai and fulfill it.

Leah's Plight the Source of Her Blessing

Torah: Leah was the first of Yaakov's wives to bear children for him. The Torah states that after bearing her forth son for Yaakov, Leah declared, "This time let me gratefully praise G-d. Therefore she called him Yehudah...." Why did Leah not immediately express her thanks to G-d after giving birth to her first son? Since until that point she had been, barren one would think that she should have given thanks to G-d to be able to bear a child. However, we see that regarding the names of her first three sons, they are related to her personal plight. Regarding the naming of her first son Reuvain, Leah declared, "It is because G-d saw my affliction."

Regarding the naming of her second son *Shimon*, *Leah* declared, "It is because G's heard that I was despised..." Regarding the naming of her third son *Levy*, *Leah* declared, "This time my husband will become attached to me..." It was only after the birth of her forth son *Yehudah*, did *Leah* acknowledge the special gift that G-d had given her- that she had

received more than her allotted share of sons among the wives of *Yaakov*. She knew through tradition that *Yaakov* have twelve sons from the two Matriarchs and their two maidservants. If this were so, then each of *Yaakov*'s wives was destined to give birth to only three sons. When *Leah* gave birth to her forth sons, she understood that G-d had allotted to her more than her equal share with the others. She thus gave thanks to G-d.

Midrash: "The verse states, 'G-d saw that she was despised...' What is the meaning of this? It should be known that Leah was initially destined to marry Esav and Rachel was to marry Yaakov. Leah would sit at the crossroads and would enquire about Esav. She would ask, 'Who is he?' They would answer her, 'He is an evil man. He is a murderer. He is a highwayman... Everything that is abominable in the Eyes of G-d, Esav does.' After hearing this, she would wail and cry saying, 'My sister and I come from the same womb! How could my sister Rachel be destined to marry Yaakov the tzaddik, and I be destined to marry Esav, the evil one.' She cried and internalized her affliction until her eyes became red and irritated. This comes to explain the verse, 'G-d saw that she was despised.'

"It is not that Yaakov despised her, but rather Leah despised everything that Esav represented. However, Rachel when she heard that she would be married to Yaakov the tzaddik, she rejoiced and prided herself that she would marry such a special person. However, ultimately they both married Yaakov. G-d then said, 'The one who was afflicted and pained because she despised the evil ways and actions of Esav, she will not be kept at a distance from Yaakov. She will be favored by the tzaddik. It is because of this, that she will be the first to merit sons." In contrast, since Rachel was not given the same predicament as Leah to despise and be afflicted by the pain of the possibility of marrying Esav the evil one, she did not merit to have children until Leah had given birth to all her children.

We see that when G-d presents individuals with situations, where there is a question if his spirituality would be compromised by being connected to evil, if that person should internalize that pain and be overwhelm Although one is naturally pained over one's material deficiencies or physical state and may recognize it as atonement, it is not the equivalent of being pained for the sake of G-d. *Leah* caused that

G-d should bring about a miracle to alter nature on her behalf because the basis for her pain was that her situation was considered an abomination in the Eyes of G-d. She therefore was consumed with this pain. The one who is pained over the spiritual, will merit special Divine Assistance to intervene in the physical that will bring about special results.

Thus, when Leah named her first children and mentioned that G-d saw her plight or heard her affliction, based on the Midrash, it is not what she had actually said. Rather, she herself had valued G-d's Honor to such a degree that she was pained to be exposed to such evil. Therefore she thanked G-d for those children. However, after she had expressed and appreciated the basis for meriting those children, she gave thanks to G-d for her forth son because it was more than her allotted number of sons.

Gemara in Tractate Sotah: There were a number of prominent Torah Sages that were financially supported by others so that they could study Torah without distraction. Hillel as a young man lived in abject poverty and sacrificed greatly to be able to study Torah. Hillel had a brother who had entered into commerce and was willing to fully support him so that he should not be distracted from his Torah studies.

However, a heavenly voice called out and said to Hillel that he should continue to disgrace for the sake of G-d than to be supported by anyone. Because Hillel suffered and sacrificed for the sake of Torah, he merited to be the Prince of Israel and the leading Torah Sage. The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin tell us, that had the Torah not been given through Moshe, it could have been given through Hillel, the elder. We see that Hillel's unique dimension of spirituality and Torah greatness was due to his unusual sacrifice that he made on behalf of the Torah.

The Need to Pray

Before Yaakov fled to Charan, the community of his uncle Lavan he supplicated G-d.

Torah: "Yaakov took a vow saying, 'If G-d will be with me, will guard me on this way that I am going, will give me bread to eat and clothes to wear; and I return in peace to my father's house..." Midrash: "Reb Brechya says, 'Everything that Yaakov had requested from G-d was granted. Yaakov had asked that G-d be with him.

The verse states, 'I (G-d) will accompany you...' Yaakov had asked to be protected. The verse states, 'I shall watch over you wherever you go.' Yaakov asked that he should return to his home in peace. The verse states, 'I will bring you back...' Yaakov had asked G-d to guarantee him bread (sustenance), G-d did not respond. G-d said, 'If I guarantee Yaakov his bread, he would not have any reason to supplicate Me. Therefore I will not guarantee him his bread.' The Rabbis argue with Reb Brechya: G-d in fact did respond to Yaakov-guaranteeing him his sustenance/bread – as it states, 'I will not abandon you...'

The expression of abandonment refers to sustenance. As King David writes in Psalms, 'I have never seen a devoutly righteous person abandoned by G-d so that his children should seek out bread.'" Is it conceivable that if Yaakov were guaranteed a livelihood he would no longer supplicate G-d? Evidently, according to Reb Brechya interpretation of the verse, it is a valid concern. The Rabbis on the other hand disagree and are of the opinion that Yaakov would still have sufficient reason to supplicate G-d.

Reb Brechya: G-d granted every request that Yaakov had made except for his request for sustenance because if He were to grant Yaakov everything he would not have any reason to supplicate G-d. The Midrash tells us that the reason the Holy Matriarchs were barren was because "G-d desires the prayers of the righteous." It is through the special supplications of the tzaddik when he is in a state of deprivation that he is able to reach greater dimensions heights of spirituality and thus become closer to G-d.

The Rabbis disagree with *Reb Brechya*. They understand that G-d granted *Yaakov* everything he requested. Why are the Rabbis not concerned that if *Yaakov* did in fact have everything he would have no reason to supplicate G-d? *Yaakov* understood that the reason G-d granted him with all his needs was because at the time he was spiritually worthy. Thus, the guarantee that he received was contingent upon his maintaining an advanced level of spirituality. If he were to become soiled with sin, even to the slightest degree he would forfeit the blessings that were given to him by G-d. Therefore, despite the fact that *Yaakov*

was granted all that he requested he nevertheless still needed to pray to G-d that he should not fail in his service to Him.

Torah: Regarding Sarah's request to Avraham to take Hagar as a wife, "Sarah said to Avraham, 'I will be able to build through her..." Meaning, in the merit of Avraham taking her maidservant as a wife, Sarah would be able to conceive. Sarah had given her maidservant to Avraham because she believed that she was not able to conceive because of a spiritual deficiency that she could not identify.

The reason one has difficulty from sensing one's own shortcomings is because one's ego does not allow it. However, if one is sufficiently humble, he will sense where he had failed. Therefore, *Sarah* understood that if she were to be humbled by the experience of sharing her husband with her maidservant, she would be able to identify and address the spiritual failing and make the necessary correction.

Torah: During the forty years that the Jewish people were in the desert, G-d provided them with no more than a daily portion of Manna. Although they were in an environment that one cannot survive without G-d's Assistance, the reason G-d did not offer them a larger allocation of Manna was not because He wanted them to pray, but rather it was for them to develop a sense of trust and faith in G-d that He would provide them with their needs. Thus, the receiving of the Manna is not related to the argument between Reb Brechya and the Rabbis.

Gemara in Tractate Avodah Zorah: There is a time period every day that G-d provides sustenance to all creatures, from the largest of His creations to the smallest insect.

King David in Psalms (the Ashrei prayer which is recited twice a day): "You open Your Hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing." It through the supplication for sustenance that one maintains a relationship with G-d.

Torah regarding the curse that G-d had given the snake after it seduced *Chava* to eat from the Tree: "... Accursed are you...upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life." One would think that since the snake was able to eat dirt, which is available regardless of the snake's surroundings that G-d was not cursing the snake but rather it

was a blessing. The snake would be continuously guaranteed sustenance. However, it is to the contrary. G-d did not want to have any relationship with the snake, even in thought. Therefore, He decreed that its sustenance should be available without his direct continuous intervention in its behalf.

Good and Evil on Equal Footing

Torah: Yaakov our Patriarch had a prophetic dream when he had slept on the Temple Mount. He had seen angels ascending and descending a ladder that extended into heaven. Each of the angels that ascended and descended the ladder represented the archangels of the various civilizations that were going to enslave the Jewish people in the future.

Midrash: "Rav Shmuel Bar Nachman says, 'These are the angels of the nations of the world. Yaakov was shown the archangel of Babylon. He ascended 70 rungs of the ladder and then he descended. (Indicating that the Babylonian exile was going to be 70 years). Yaakov was then shown the archangel of Persia, which ascended 52 rungs before descending. The archangel of the Greeks ascended 100 rungs and then descended.

However, when Yaakov saw the archangel of the Edomites (Esav/Rome) it continued to ascend without any indication of descending. Yaakov upon seeing this was frightened. He said to G-d, 'Is it possible that this angel will ascend without ever descending? G-d responded, 'My servant Yaakov, do not fear. Even if you will see him (the archangel of Edom) ascending up to the point that is next to Me, from there I will bring him down.' As it is written, If they rise like an eagle and perch among the stars, from there I (G-d) will bring them down.'" The Midrash is saying that the archangel of Edom, which is a personification of evil is able to ascend to a point that he can associate himself with G-d. Why would G-d allow this to take place?

Gemara in Tractate Yomah: The evil inclination of idolatry was such an overwhelming force at one time that it ravaged and destroyed the Jewish people. One of the sins that had caused the destruction of the First Temple, was the sin of idolatry. It was even more overwhelming than the sexual drive. The Men of the High Assembly, fasted for thirty days so that G-d should reveal to them the evil inclination for idolatry so that it could be destroyed.

After thirty days they had witnessed a fiery lion exiting from the Holy of Holies. They took this fiery lion that was the representation of the inclination for idolatry and removed it from existence. It is interesting to note that the Holy of Holies, the location of G-d's Presence, should be the location from which the inclination for idolatry should exit. Seemingly, it is indicated that this intense impure force has relevance to the most holy.

In order to maintain the context of choice in the world, G-d needs have good and evil exist in on even plane so that each should be a counterbalance for the other. If the representation of good would be initially established at a level that would be superior and more advanced than evil, humanity would be compelled to do good, thus rendering choice irrelevant. Therefore, in order to maintain the counterbalance, there needs to be a representation of good as well as evil at the same advanced spiritual level. Thus, the fiery lion

that represented idolatry emanated from the Holy of Holies. Yaakov, being the representation of good and Esav, of evil, needed to immerge from their mother's womb simultaneously so that good and evil should exist on an equal footing.

We recite the verse in our prayers, "The saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge Esav's mountain, and the kingdom will be Hashem's. The Hashem will be King over all the world, on that day G-d will be One and His Name will be One." Meaning, at the end of time, regardless of the degree of evil that will exist in the world, G-d will vanguish the representation of Esay from existence. This will thus endow mankind with a level of clarity to be able to recognize and fully appreciate G-d in every aspect of creation. However, before that will take place, G-d allows the archangel of Edom to ascend to His level, to be on par with the Jewish people.





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