

**Saving a Life**  
Thank you to all who joined in our appeal this week.  
In 24 hours, we raised \$15,000 to help meet the goal.  
There is true strength in our numbers.

1997  
2008  
11  
YEARS

*Dedicated to Scriptural and Rabbinic Verification  
of Authentic Jewish Beliefs and Practices*

# JewishTimes

Volume VIII, No. 6...Dec. 5, 2008

[WWW.MESORA.ORG/JEWISHTIMES](http://WWW.MESORA.ORG/JEWISHTIMES)

Download and Print Free

## IN THIS ISSUE

PARSHA: VAYETZE	1-5
TORAH CODES II	6,7
PARSHA: THE LADDER	7,8
PARSHA: TZADDIK'S ANGER	9
News	10

**THE  
JEWISHTIMES**  
EDUCATING 10,000  
WORLDWIDE



JOIN IN THE MITZVAH  
[WWW.MESORA.ORG/DONATE](http://WWW.MESORA.ORG/DONATE)

## CANDLE LIGHTING 12/5

Boston	3:53	Moscow	3:40
Chicago	4:01	New York	4:10
Cleveland	4:39	Paris	4:35
Detroit	4:41	Philadelphia	4:17
Houston	5:03	Phoenix	5:02
Jerusalem	4:16	Pittsburgh	4:35
Johannesburg	6:31	Seattle	4:00
Los Angeles	4:25	Sydney	7:35
London	3:34	Tokyo	4:09
Miami	5:11	Toronto	4:23
Montreal	3:53	Washington DC	4:27

## Weekly Parsha

# Vayetze

RABBI BERNIE FOX

## Miracles on Behalf of the Tzadik

*And he came upon the place and he  
spent the night there, for the sun had  
set. And he took from the stones of the  
place and he put them under his head*

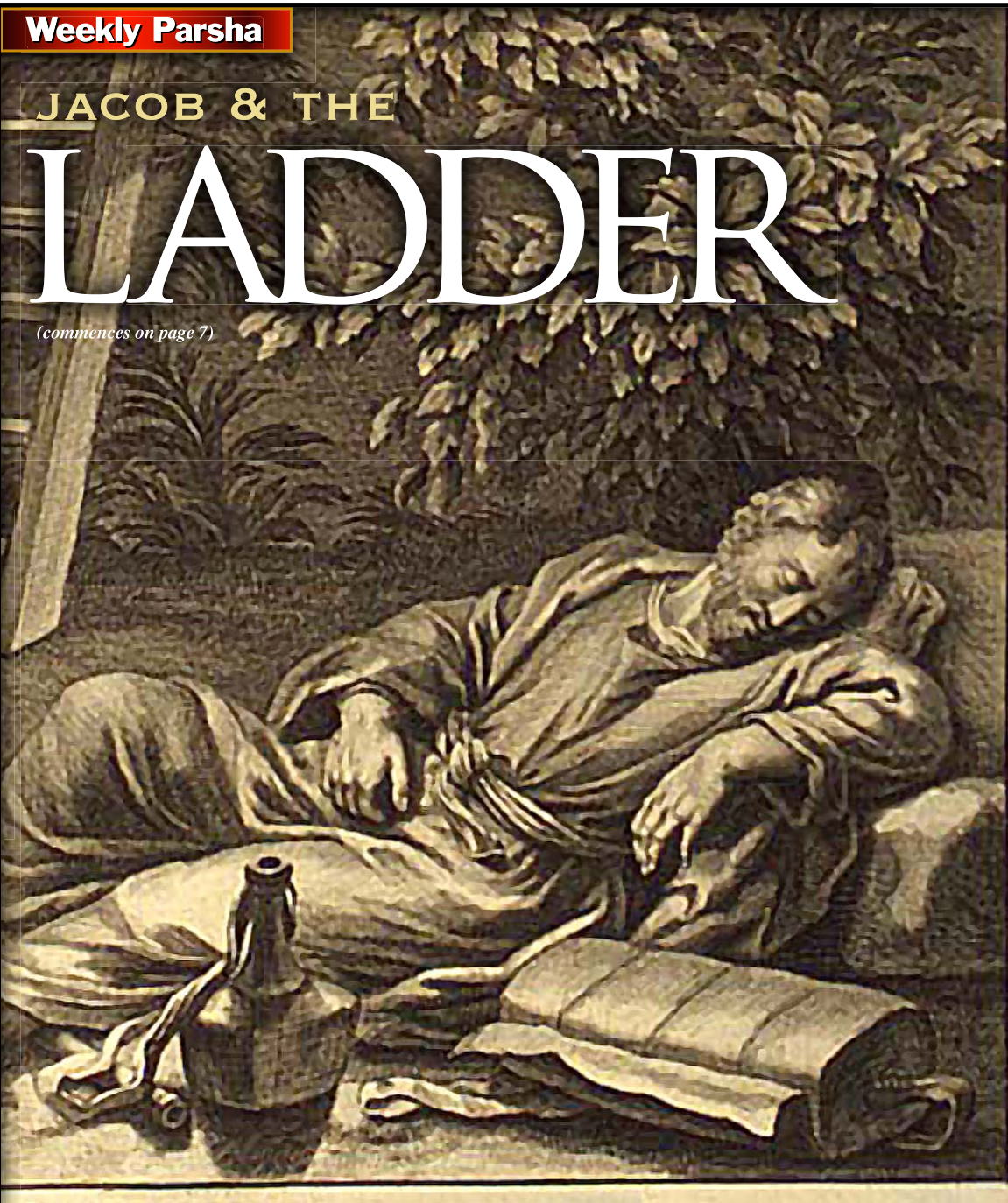
*(continued on next page)*

## Weekly Parsha

## JACOB & THE

# LADDER

*(commences on page 7)*





(Vayetze cont. from pg. 1)

## Weekly Parsha

# JewishTimes

Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought



**The JewishTimes is published every Friday and delivered by email. Subscriptions are FREE. To subscribe, send any email message to: [subscribe@mesora.org](mailto:subscribe@mesora.org)**

Subscribers will also receive our advertisers' emails and our regular email announcements.

**Contacts:**

We invite feedback or any questions at this address: [office@mesora.org](mailto:office@mesora.org)  
Ph(516)569-8888 Fx(516)569-0404

**Advertising:**

<https://www.Mesora.org/Advertising>

**Donations:**

<https://www.Mesora.org/Donate>

**Content at Mesora.org:****JewishTimes Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/JewishTimes>

**Philosophy Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Philosophy>

**Weekly Parsha Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/WeeklyParsha>

**Audio Archives:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Audio>

**Interactive, Live, Audible Sessions:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/TalkLive>

**Database Search:**

<http://www.Mesora.org/Search>

Articles may be reprinted without consent of the JewishTimes or the authors, provided the content is not altered, and credits are given.

and he lay in that place. (Beresheit 28:11)

It seems from this pasuk that Yaakov took a number of stones and he placed them under his head. Later, the Chumash explains that Yaakov took "the stone" upon which he had rested his head and made it into a pillar. He anointed this pillar with oil and designated it as a monument. The Chumash seems ambiguous regarding the number of stones that Yaakov used. The first pasuk indicates that there was a plurality of stones, while the latter mentions a single stone.

Rashi quotes the comment of the Talmud in Tractate Chullin. He explains that Yaakov chose a group of stones. During the night, these stones began to argue. Each vied for the honor of supporting the head of the righteous Yaakov. Hashem resolved this debate by combining the individual stones into one large rock.[1]

The meaning of Rashi's comments can be understood within the context of Yaakov's dream. In his dream, Yaakov was assured by Hashem that during his sojourn with Lavan, he would continue to experience His providence. He would return to the house of his father, physically and spiritually unharmed.

The workings of Divine providence are depicted through the allegory of the stones. In order to understand the message of this allegory, it is important to understand the concept of Divine providence. Hashem created a universe governed by natural laws. Each law is a result of Hashem's wisdom. They are designed to guide the universe in the best possible manner. However, on occasion, natural laws produce outcomes detrimental to humankind. The laws that govern weather are an excellent example. These laws produce the climate and the seasons that provide the human race with sustenance and comfort. Rain falls to nourish crops. A drier season follows, during which the produce is harvested. Seasonal variations in temperature remain within the range that supports life. However, sometimes, these same, wondrous laws can produce catastrophe. Hurricanes, tornadoes and floods do not happen every day. Yet, they are the outcome of the same amazing laws that express Hashem's benevolence towards humanity.

Nachmanides explains that providence involves Hashem's interference with nature. Hashem intervenes on behalf of the deserving to prevent

catastrophes that would otherwise naturally occur.[2]

We can now understand the parable of the rocks. The rocks represent the individual laws of nature. Each is an expression of Hashem's wisdom. Each is designed to support humanity. However, on occasion, these laws come into conflict, and disaster can result. Providence involves Hashem's intervention in this conflict. He alters natural cause-and-effect for the benefit of the deserving person. Thus, the many individual laws are coordinated to produce the best result for this individual.

**Yaakov's Vow to Hashem**

*And Yaakov made a vow saying: If the Lord will be with me and he will care for me on the road on which I travel and He will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear and I will return in peace to my father's house and Hashem will be my Lord, then this stone that I have placed as a monument will be a house of the Lord and I will tithe to You all that You will give me. (Beresheit 28:20-22)*

Yaakov is traveling to the home of Lavan, the brother of his mother, Rivkah. Along the way he spends the night in Bet El. There, Yaakov has a prophetic dream. When Yaakov awakens he makes a vow to Hashem.



This vow is expressed in the above pesukim. These passages contain an interesting mystery. The vow expresses a reciprocal relationship or a "deal" with Hashem. In response to specified kindnesses, Yaakov will carry out certain commitments. The "if" clause contains Hashem's acts of kindness. The "then" clause expresses Yaakov's responding commitment. The mystery is where the "if" clause ends and the "then" clause starts. This is not at all clear from the original text.

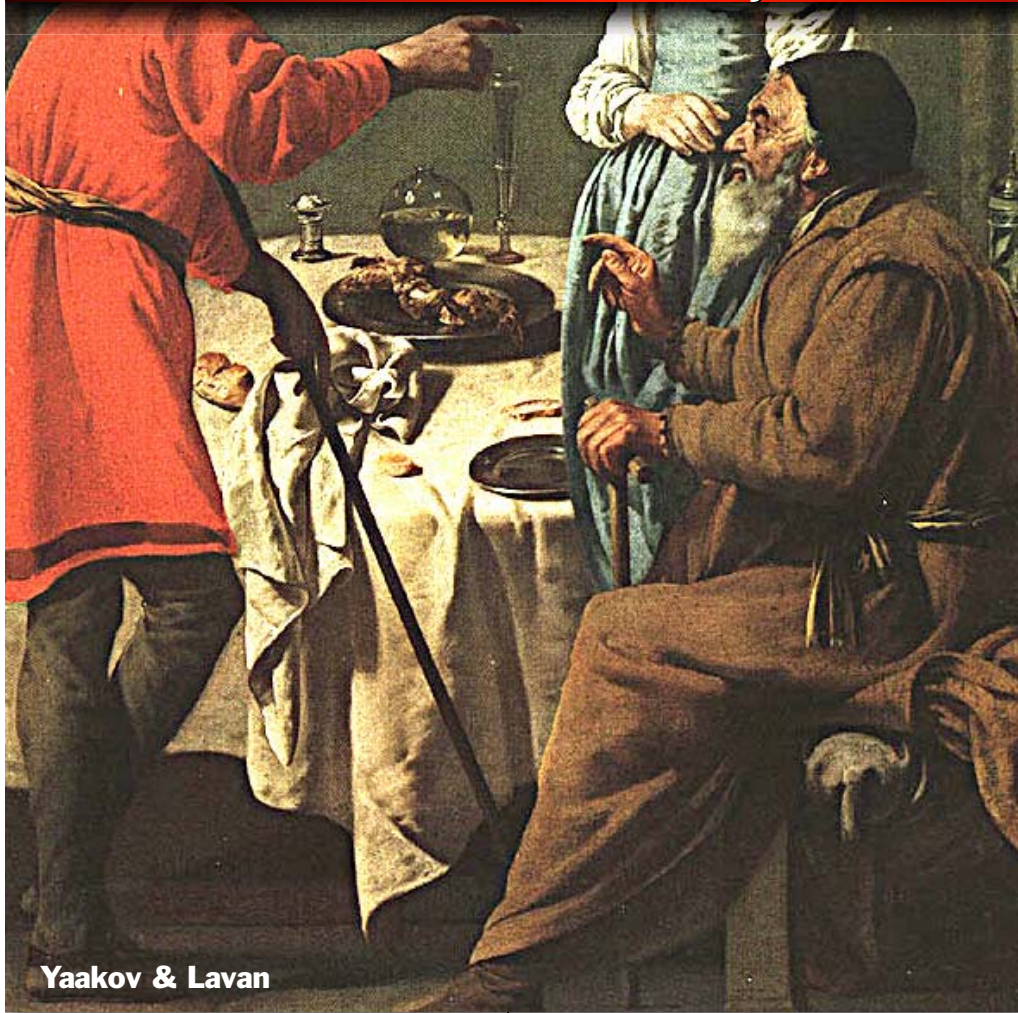
The above translation adopts Rashi's response to the issue. He reasons that the phrase "Hashem will be my Lord" is part of the "if" clause. Yaakov was praying for Hashem's protection during his journey and for a safe return to his home. This would be an expression of providence, or Hashem, acting as Lord over Yaakov. He vows that in response to this benevolence, he will dedicate Bet El as a place of worship and will give a tithe from all of his wealth to Hashem.[3] Rashi reasons that the phrase "Hashem will be my Lord" cannot possibly be part of Yaakov's response; Yaakov would not state that acceptance of Hashem to be his Lord as contingent upon Hashem's benevolence.

(continued on next page)



(Vayetze cont. from previous page)

## Weekly Parsha



Yaakov &amp; Lavan

Many of the commentators disagreed with Rashi. Sforno is among these dissenters. He argues that the phrase "Hashem will be my Lord" can be interpreted as part of Yaakov's reciprocal commitment. Sforno bases his conclusions upon a careful analysis of Yaakov's wording. The actual term in the pasuk represented by Hashem is the Tetragrammaton. This name is used in reference to Hashem acting with kindness. The term translated as "Lord" is the name Elokim. This name is associated with instances of G-d demonstrating strict justice.

Sforno continues to explain that in the pesukim the names for G-d are alternated. He suggests that this indicates the intention of the vow. Yaakov recognizes that the Almighty is Creator of the universe. Such an awesome deity has no obligation to care for an individual creature. If G-d exercises providence over Yaakov, then He is acting as a G-d of mercy. Elokim has transformed Himself to Hashem. This expression of G-d's benevolence requires Yaakov's recognition and gratitude. This will be expressed through the dedication of Bet El and the tithing of his wealth. Yaakov also accepts that a failure, on his part, to

respond to Hashem's grace would be a grave sin deserving severe punishment. It would be appropriate, in such circumstances, for the benevolent Hashem to revert to the Elokim of judgment. Sforno would paraphrase the pesukim as follows: If the Creator treats me with mercy and kindness, then I must respond with complete dedication. Any failure would deserve strict punishment.[4]

This then is Yaakov's meaning. Hashem treats His creations with mercy and kindness. In response, humanity must recognize this benevolence through complete devotion. Only through this recognition can we attain His continued kindness. If we cannot recognize Hashem's grace, we deserve His judgment. Providence requires our recognition and appreciation.

### Lavan's Suspicion of Yaakov

*And Yaakov was angry and he argued with Lavan. And Yaakov responded to Lavan and he said: What is my crime and what is my wrongdoing that caused you to pursue me?* (Beresheit 31:36)

Yaakov becomes wealthy during his stay with Lavan. He sees that Lavan's sons have become jealous of his success. Also, Lavan is less friendly than in the past. Yaakov decides that it is time to return to Canaan. He fears that Lavan may try to interfere with his decision. Therefore, Yaakov prepares his family and they depart in secret.

Lavan discovers that Yaakov and his family have left and he immediately gives chase. Lavan overtakes Yaakov. He admonishes Yaakov for fleeing and depriving him of the opportunity of a providing a proper farewell. He also accuses Yaakov of stealing an idol.

Yaakov reveals to Lavan that he feared his father-in-law would attempt to interfere with his plans. Yaakov challenges Lavan to search his possessions and prove that either he or a member of his family stole the idol. Lavan searches thoroughly and finds nothing.

Our pasuk introduces Yaakov's reaction. Yaakov is angry. He asks Lavan to explain his reasons for chasing him. He then reminds Lavan of the honest services he provided Lavan as a shepherd. He emphasizes his dedication and vigilance. Yaakov contrasts his own behavior with Lavan's dishonesty. Lavan did not honor the deals he made with Yaakov and constantly altered the terms of Yaakov's compensation.

Yaakov's reaction needs to be considered. It is understandable that he was angered by Lavan's accusation that he had stolen from him. It makes sense that he would remind Lavan of the honesty he had consistently demonstrated. However, it is difficult to understand Yaakov's reasons for delving into Lavan's duplicity. If Yaakov had a complaint against Lavan, it should have been stated long ago. Yaakov had agreed to work for Lavan knowing his nature. What does Yaakov hope to accomplish now through accusing Lavan of dishonesty? This is a behavior that we would understand in a normal person. However, it is out of character for a tzadik and chacham – a righteous and wise person.

There is an interesting hint to be found in the wording of our pasuk. The word commonly used in the Chumash for "pursuit" is redifah. Yaakov did not use this term. Instead he chose the word delikah. Rabbaynu Avraham ben HaRambam comments that his grandfather, the father of Maimonides, explained the difference between these two terms. Redifah means to pursue an object or person. The term describes an action. It makes no reference to the feelings of the pursuer. In contrast, the term delikah implies anger and

(continued on next page)

(Vayetze cont. from previous page)

## Weekly Parsha

hatred. The term describes a pursuit by a person driven by these feelings of hostility.[5]

Yaakov is telling Lavan that he did not accept Lavan's explanation for his pursuit. Yaakov claims that Lavan has accused him wrongly. Lavan's accusation is motivated by hatred and distrust.

Yaakov next analyzes Lavan's reasons for hating him. He proves that these feelings are not based upon any legitimate claims. Yaakov has been upright and honest in all of his dealings with Lavan. Now, Yaakov comes to the conclusion of his analysis: It is Lavan who has been consistently dishonest. This explains Lavan's feelings towards Yaakov. Lavan is a hateful crook. He projects his own attitudes onto those with whom he deals, assuming that everyone is as corrupt as himself. This conveniently provides Lavan with a rationalization for his own dishonest behavior. He rationalizes his hateful pursuit of Yaakov by reasoning that he is simply protecting himself. Lavan's distrust of Yaakov is an expression of Lavan's own desire to cheat Yaakov.

Rabbaynu Avraham ben HaRambam explains that this instance proves the truth of a teaching of our Sages. They tell us that a false accusation is inevitably an accurate reflection upon the accusers own deficiencies - Kol haposel, bemumo posel.[6]

by the obvious question. This was not an accurate description of his relationship to Lavan. Yaakov was not Lavan's brother. He was Lavan's nephew. Yaakov's mother – Rivkah – was Lavan's sister.

Rashi offers two explanations. The simple interpretation is that Yaakov did not mean that he was Lavan's brother in the literal sense. He meant that they were kin. Rashi points out that this is not the only instance in which the term "brother" is used to denote kinship.

However, Rashi offers another explanation. Yaakov provided two descriptions of himself. He said he was the brother of Lavan and the son of Rivkah. Now, it would have sufficed for Yaakov to describe himself as Rivkah's son. Why did Yaakov also describe himself as the brother, or relative, of Lavan? Rashi responds that there was a message communicated in this description. Rivkah was an honest, straightforward individual. In contrast, Lavan was a dishonest conniver. Yaakov intended to compare himself to both his mother and uncle and communicate that he was the equal of both. He was as honest as Rivkah but also capable of being as devious as Lavan.[7]

It seems that Yaakov was saying that he was prepared to act dishonestly! If Lavan attempts to treat him unfairly, he will retaliate by treating Lavan in the

same manner. Yaakov seems to be arguing that it is sometimes appropriate to be less fair and honest. But, as shall become clear, this was not Yaakov's message.

*And Yaakov loved Rachel and he said: I will work for you for seven years for Rachel, your younger daughter.* (Beresheit 29:18)

Our pasuk tells us that Yaakov loved Rachel and wished to marry her. He asked her father for his approval of the marriage and offered to work for Lavan for seven years in exchange for marriage to Rachel. He described Rachel as "Rachel, your younger daughter." Once again, Yaakov adopts a rather elaborate description when a more simple description would seem adequate. Lavan knew who Rachel was. Yaakov did not need to describe Rachel as Lavan's younger daughter.

Rashi explains that Yaakov was fully aware of Lavan's deviousness. He did not want to describe his chosen wife as "Rachel." Lavan might substitute another girl with the same name. Also, Yaakov was not satisfied in describing his wife as "Rachel, your daughter." Lavan might switch the names of his daughters and then substitute Leyah – the newly

(continued on next page)

### Yaakov's Understanding of Lavan

*And Yaakov told Rachel that he was the brother of her father and that he was the son of Rivkah. And she ran and told her father.* (Beresheit 29:12)

The Torah cannot be defined as merely a religion. The term "religion" is generally understood to refer to a system of worship. It is true that the Torah does include a system of divine service. However, this is only a part of the Torah's message. Beyond providing a system of worship the Torah also deals with many other issues. It regulates conduct within the family. It includes a system of adjudication and it assures social welfare. The Torah provides regulation and an orientation that extends to virtually every element of communal, national and personal life. This includes a sophisticated system of laws and ethics that govern commercial and business conduct. Our parasha includes the first extensive treatment of business relations. This is communicated through a comparative analysis of the business ethics of Yaakov and his father-in-law, Lavan.

Yaakov travels to Haran. There he comes to a well and meets Rachel, the daughter of Lavan. In our pasuk, Yaakov introduces himself to Rachel. He tells her that he is her father's brother. Rashi is bothered

## JewishTimes

*The Weekly Journal on Jewish Thought*

# It's better to give and to receive!

**Give:** Email a FREE subscription of the JewishTimes to a friend or relative and they'll also receive 2 free gifts at right: our 60 pg book *Retrospective* and the 32 pg *Passover Special* edition with astonishing imagery.

**Receive:** As you help grow our readership, more advertisers place ads. We pass that on to you in the form of your continued, free JewishTimes subscription. Plus, we'll give you these 2 publications! *Invite others today!*

[www.Mesora.org/Subscriptions](http://www.Mesora.org/Subscriptions)





named Rachel – for the real Rachel. In order to preclude either of these possibilities, Yaakov described his chosen very carefully as “Rachel, your younger daughter.” But Rashi explains that despite this precaution, Lavan succeeded in deceiving Yaakov and substituted Leyah for Rachel.[8],[9]

This raises two questions. Yaakov claimed that he could be Lavan’s equal in deviousness. Apparently, Yaakov was very wrong! Why did Yaakov assume he could match Lavan and where did he make his mistake?

Let us begin with the first question: Why did Yaakov assume he could match Lavan? Yaakov believed that he was just as smart as Lavan. He knew that Lavan was very shrewd. But he assumed that his wisdom was a match for Lavan’s shrewdness. In fact, Yaakov was correct. Yaakov described Rachel with such precision that he succeeded in precluding the legitimate substitution of Leyah, or any other woman, for Rachel. It is true that Lavan substituted Leyah for Rachel. But then Lavan never claimed that he had fulfilled his bargain. He admitted to the substitution.

We can now understand Yaakov’s intention in describing himself as Lavan’s equal. He did not mean that it is appropriate to be dishonest or unfair and that he could, and would, match Lavan in dishonesty. He meant that his wisdom was a match for Lavan’s shrewdness. He claimed that with this wisdom he would be able to foresee and forestall any attempt by Lavan to be devious. So, what was Yaakov’s mistake?

*And Lavan said: This is not done in our place – to give the younger daughter before the elder daughter.* (Beresheit 29:26)

Yaakov discovers that Lavan has substituted Leyah for Rachel. He confronts Lavan. Lavan does not deny the substitution. Instead, he explains that the substitution is justified. Leyah is the elder daughter. It is not appropriate to give the younger daughter in marriage before the elder.

In this passage, the Torah tells us how Lavan succeeded in deceiving Yaakov. Yaakov realized that Lavan would use any legitimate means to substitute Leyah, or some other woman, for Rachel. He assumed that stating their agreement in precise terms he would remove all the opportunities for a substitution. In other words, Yaakov’s concern was that Lavan would defend a substitution with the contention he had kept the terms of their agreement as he understood them. Therefore, Yaakov painstakingly detailed the terms of the agreement, eliminating any potential claim of by Lavan that he had misunderstood the bargain. However, he did not realize that Lavan would rationalize an overt abrogation of their agreement. Through relying on the rationalization

that Leyah was the elder daughter, and should therefore be married off before her younger sister, Lavan completely ignored the terms of his agreement with Yaakov and substituted Leyah for Rachel. In other words, because Yaakov underestimated Lavan’s deviousness, he was deceived. He assumed that Lavan would rely on his shrewdness to defend another interpretation of their arrangement to his own advantage, and to Yaakov’s detriment. But he did not expect an open breach of their agreement.

Of course, this raises another question. Yaakov recognized that Lavan was a cheat. He knew he was devious. Yet, he did not predict that Lavan would be able to rationalize an open breach of their agreement. Why was Yaakov unable to foresee the extent of Lavan’s dishonesty?

*And he came also to Rachel. And he loved Rachel more than Leyah. And he worked with him another, additional seven years.* (Beresheit 29:30)

Lavan agrees to give Rachel to Yaakov as a wife after Yaakov’s marriage to Leyah. Yaakov and Lavan make a new deal. In exchange for Rachel, Yaakov will work for Lavan for an additional seven years. Our pasuk tells us that Lavan gives Rachel to Yaakov and Yaakov fulfills his part of the bargain by serving Lavan the additional years.

The wording of the passage is problematic. The pasuk says that Yaakov worked for Lavan “another, additional seven years”. The phrase “another, additional” is clearly redundant. It would have sufficed to use either term – “another” or “additional”. But why does the Torah use both? Rashi explains that the intent is to equate this second seven years with the first seven years of labor that Yaakov provided. During the first seven years, Yaakov worked under the assumption that Lavan would respect their agreement and provide him with Rachel as a wife. However, the second seven years began after Lavan cheated Yaakov. This second set of seven years was a direct result of Lavan’s dishonesty. Nonetheless, the service that Yaakov provided during this second seven years was indistinguishable from his service during the first set. During the first set, Yaakov was a dedicated and honest employee. During the second set, he provided the same level of service. [10]

There is an important point here. Yaakov entered into this agreement as a result of Lavan’s dishonesty. Nonetheless, once Yaakov made the agreement, he scrupulously observed its terms. Unlike Lavan, he did not resort to rationalization. He did not breach his agreement and reduce the quality of his service. Despite the disagreeable circumstances that motivated him to enter into this agreement, Yaakov did not cheat Lavan, nor did he deceive himself into justifying a reason for cheating Lavan. [BMF1]

Now, we can explain Yaakov’s error at a deeper level. Yaakov was confident in his own wisdom. He correctly considered it the match for Lavan’s shrewdness. But Yaakov was not a master of human psychology. As a fundamentally honest person, he could not appreciate the ability of human beings to rationalize unmitigated dishonesty. Lavan resorted to a form of behavior with which Yaakov could not identify. Because this behavior was so alien to him, he could not foresee or predict its manifestations. Yaakov could not rationalize deceit. Because he could not identify with or relate to such blatant corruption, he could not foresee Lavan’s behavior. Because of his own goodness, he underestimated the human ability to rationalize open dishonesty. ■

[1] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 28:11.

[2] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban / Nachmanides), Ketvai HaRamban, Drush – Torat Hashem Temimah (Mosad HaRav Kook, 5724), pp. 153-155.

[3] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 28:21-22.

[4] Rabbaynu Ovadia Sforno, Commentary on Sefer Beresheit, 28:21.

[5] Rabbaynu Avraham ben HaRambam, Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 31:36.

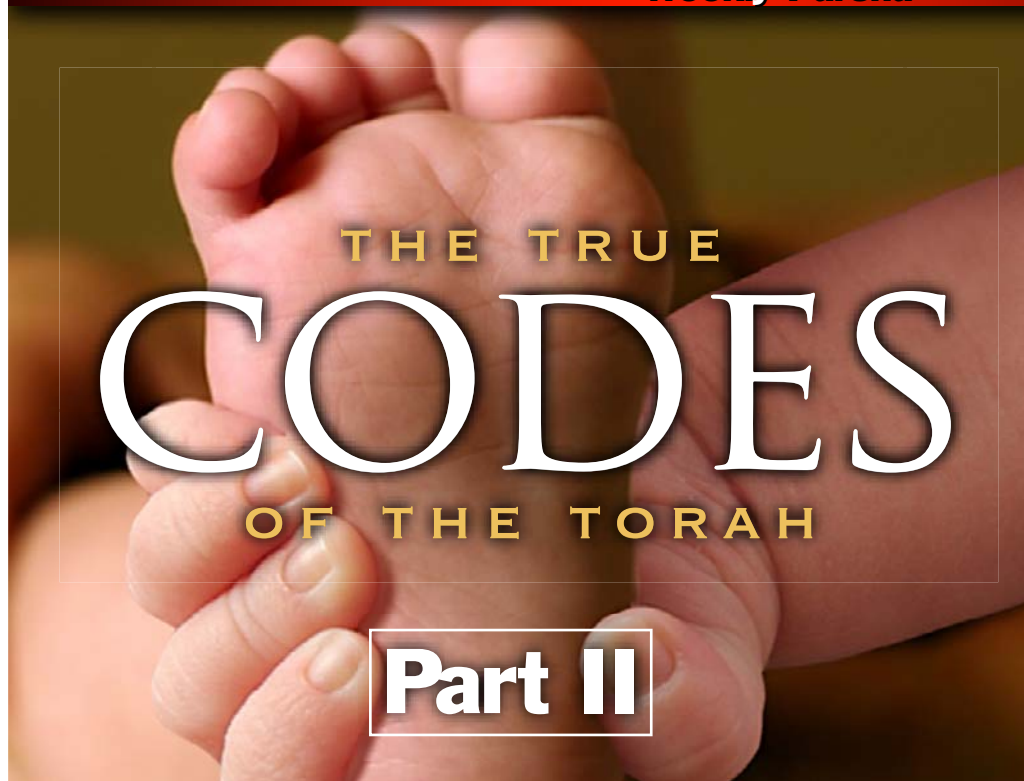
[6] Rabbaynu Avraham ben HaRambam, Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 31:45.

[7] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 29:12.

[8] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 29:18.

[9] It should be noted that there seems to be a contradiction in Rashi’s comments. Our Rashi explains that Lavan succeeded in deceiving Yaakov. However, according to Rashi’s comments later in the parasha, this is not the case. According to these later comments, Yaakov and Rachel agreed to a signal that they would use in order to assure that the woman Yaakov married was indeed Rachel. This signal should have prevented Lavan from making a substitution. However, when Lavan made the substitution, Rachel provided Leyah with the signal, rather than expose her sister to embarrassment. According to these comments, Lavan did not succeed in out-maneuvering Yaakov. Instead, Rachel’s complicity led to Yaakov’s marriage to Leyah. It is possible that this apparent contradiction can be resolved through assuming that Lavan suspected that Yaakov and Rachel had arranged some signal, but he depended on Rachel’s loyalty to Leyah to undermine Yaakov and Rachel’s precaution. However, this explanation is speculative.

[10] Rabbaynu Shlomo ben Yitzchak (Rashi), Commentary on Sefer Beresheit 29:30.



RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM

**I** must first correct a statement in last week's article. Jacob did not obtain the "Blessings of Abraham" from Esav: that was to be his regardless of Isaac blessing Esav. Jacob actually sought the "birth-right blessings", which are separate from Abraham's Blessings. Let us begin...

Last week we discussed the Torah's subtle method of relating disclosed ideas. The very texts that give rise to perplexing questions are also God's intended clues to their answers. We wondered why Jacob was so quickly prepared to request Esav's, birthright. Why did Rivkah love Jacob more than Esav? Why did she never tell Isaac her prophetic knowledge that the older Esav would serve the younger Jacob? Why did she feel that she must deceive Isaac to insure Jacob receives the birthright blessings? Why was she informed of the fact that Jacob would be superior, while Isaac did not receive such a prophecy? And why was Jacob's hand clutching Esav's heel?

We had answered that there was a need for Rivkah to learn of the different natures of her two sons. She learned through prophecy that Jacob would be the superior. But she also learned through seeing his hand clutching Esav's heel, one more essential lesson. Through this act, Rivkah learned that Jacob possessed the natural tendency to usurp Esav.

It was only through this knowledge gained by seeing his hand grabbing his brother's heel that Rivkah thereby learned that she must harness his nature to insure the prophecy comes to be. Had she merely received knowledge that Jacob was to be superior, this knowledge alone does not compel her to act. Rather, it was the physical act of Jacob grabbing his brother's heel through which Rivkah understood she was seeing this for a reason. She deduced that this competitive display was necessary to indicate that her two sons have various natures, through which, she must play a role to insure these natures are acted out. She must make Jacob topple Esav in "status", when the time is right.

Rivkah imparted this knowledge to Jacob, which we said explains why Jacob was so ready to request the birthright that day. For Jacob was always ready, and waiting for the right moment to follow his mother's imperative to seize his brother's heel, i.e., seizing the birthright.

We also said Rivkah was correct to never tell Isaac, and also to steal the birthright...for Isaac would not react properly had he learned that Esav was not befitting of the birthright. He would not accept that in theory. This is clearly proven when Isaac is trembling at the knowledge that he unknowingly, but success-

fully transferred the birthright to Jacob. He understood now, for the first time, that he had gravely misjudged his beloved Esav. He now realized Esav was not up to par. This greatly distressed Isaac. But it also confirmed that Rivkah was correct to never involve Isaac in her prophecy, or her plans to assist Jacob in usurping his elder brother.

Having read this, my friend Shaya asked a great question: "I understand that 'after' Rivkah witnessed Isaac favoring Esav, that Rivkah had grounds to omit Isaac from her prophecy and her plans. But before she even had the prophecy, prior to giving birth...she avoided asking Isaac for an explanation of her abnormal pregnancy! She asked Shem or Abraham. How can you explain this avoidance of Isaac 'before' Isaac ever expressed any favoritism towards Esav?" I recognized the problem Shaya had raised, and immediately went back to the verses.

Reading from the very beginning of the Parsha, I was bothered by the first two verses:

*"And these are the generations of Isaac son of Abraham; Abraham bore Isaac. And it was when Isaac was forty that he took Rivkah the daughter of Betuel the Arami from Padan Aram, the sister of Lavan the Arami, for a wife".*

Think about this: the first verse already says "Isaac son of Abraham". Why then does it repeat, "Abraham bore Isaac"? And in verse 2, if we are already told that Betuel – Lavan's father – was an "Arami", and if this means a nationality, why are we told again that Lavan was also an "Arami"? If Lavan's father was an Arami, then we know Lavan his son is also an Arami!

There are no redundancies in God's Torah messages. I thought about the first question. I realized "Abraham bore Isaac" must indicate something new. The word "bore" is also a difficulty, since men cannot be termed as "bearing" children. That implies pregnancy. This must mean something to do with the word "bore".

Abraham sought a wife for Isaac. We thereby learn that Isaac was incapable of selecting one for himself. We may suggest, "Abraham bore Isaac," means that Abraham "raised" Isaac. In other words, Isaac – more than any other – was in need of fatherly

(continued on next page)

dedication and guidance. He was not as others, who become independent so quickly from youth. His self-sacrifice on the altar had a profound affect on his nature. He was not even allowed to leave the land, as God told him to remain in Gerar and not descend to Egypt. Therefore, this first verse seeks to emphasize Isaac's nature as greatly dependent on Abraham.

The second verse teaches an apparent redundancy as well. We know Betuel is an Arami, so it is unnecessary to teach that his son Lavan too was an Arami...if that means a nationality. Or Hachaim teaches that Arami in fact is not indicating a nationality, but a character trait. Switching two letters (in Hebrew) in Arami, renders it into "Ramai", meaning a swindler. A liar. In this verse, we are being taught that Isaac married a woman whose father and brother were liars. So even though we are taught that Betuel is a liar, we must also be taught that Lavan too chose this lifestyle, as it is not inherited, as seen from Rivkah's upright stature. Now the questions...

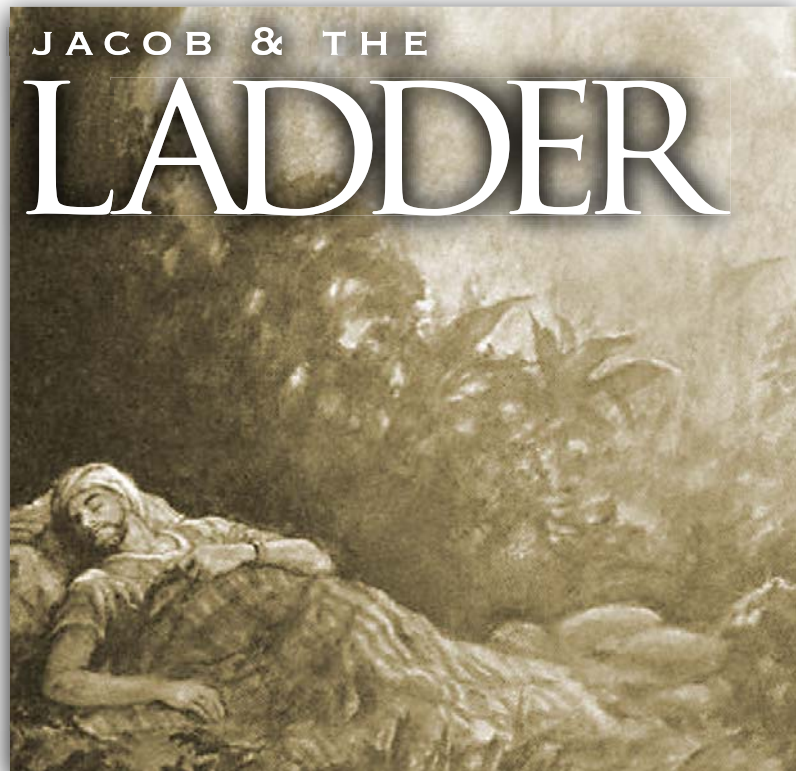
Why must we learn of Isaac's dependency on Abraham? Why must we learn that Rivkah's father and brother were liars? I feel these two verses answer Shaya's question.

We are taught that Rivkah – one who observed a cunning personality in her father and brother – was able to detect Isaac's shortcomings in terms of interpersonal issues. This prompted Rivkah to avoid approaching her husband Isaac with matters of her pregnancy. The Torah cleverly hints to the reason why Rivkah avoided Isaac: he was not fit, and she was cunning enough to know this from experiencing shrewd human nature in her home. We now understand why she went to Abraham or Shem – and n'ot Isaac – when she was in need of understanding the nature of her pregnancy, and how it might affect the establishment of B'nei Yisrael.

These two verses appear at the very start of our Parsha, as they explain the succeeding verses, and Rivkah's actions.

No question in Torah is without an answer. This time, we were fortunate enough to discover it. Thank you Shaya.

It is amazing how subtle redundancies can shed light. Again, one of the true codes of Torah. ■



**P**arshas Vayetze commences with Jacob arriving at a "place", taking a stone of that "place", and making a head shelter with it, and finally sleeping at that "place". Why the repetition? Why do we need to know also how Jacob camped, taking a stone to create a shelter?

He then has the famous dream of a ladder mounted on the ground with its top in the heavens, with God's angels ascending and descending upon it. God stands "above" it. God informs Jacob that He is the God of Abraham and Isaac, and the land upon which he lays will be his and his children's. His seed will flourish. Then God says He will watch him wherever he travels and He will return him to this land.

Jacob awakes at night, and is awed, "Certainly God is in this "place" and I did not know this. How awesome is this "place": this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" Jacob says.

**RABBI MOSHE BEN-CHAIM**

Jacob arises in the morning and takes "the" stone he used as shelter, and set it up as a monument and anointed it with oil. He then renames that "place" Bias Ayle, (house of God). Jacob then swears that as God watches over him in his travels and that He attends to his physical needs, he will surely give a tenth back to God.

Why must God insure Jacob, and not others, that he will watch him in his travels?

Why is Jacob surprised, saying, "Certainly God is in this "place" and I did not know this"? Jacob repeats the words, "How awesome is this "place!" Why must we be told this?

Why does he take that specific stone and make it into a monument to God's honor? What is the purpose of a monument?

Why does he rename the place to Bais Ayle?

Why does he make this swear?

Finally, what is the message of this amazing dream?

(continued on next page)



On the words “God is certainly in this place”, Abraham son of Maimonides writes as follows:

*“There is here a fine principle. That is, for it is known and clear that He, praised be He, is not a body and has no relationship to a place. However, even as this is so, He, praised be He, isolates certain places for honor. No man understands this principle, except for those to whom He, praised be He, reveals it. As He stated to Moses, “Remove your shoes from your feet, for the place you stand is holy ground”. This is to say that this place is isolated for honor.”*

Ibn Ezra too writes on the words “God is certainly in this place” as follows:

*“The reason is on account that places are found where miracles are seen. But I cannot explain why this is, for it is a wondrous principle”.*

When we read such statements from great minds like Maimonides’ son and Ibn Ezra, who are we to suggest explanations for what Ibn Ezra calls a “wondrous principle”? We cannot say we know what he means, as he clearly did not disclose any path through which we might unravel his words, but primarily because God did not reveal it to us. Abraham, Maimonides’ son describes the impossibility of our bodiless God to relate to space. And he also says “No man understands this principle, except for those to whom He, praised be He, reveals it”. He emphasizes his lesson, commenting on “and I did not know”, that “this idea cannot be known unless through God revealing it”. In other words, this idea is not something which man can arrive at through reasoning. Jacob thereby expressed this problem.

Similarly, we see that God says concerning His planned destruction of Sodom, “Shall I conceal from Abraham what I will do?” God teaches us here that without His communication, Abraham would be missing an idea: an idea that is impossible for a human to uncover without prophecy. However, there, God does in fact reveal to Abraham and to us, what that principle was.[1]

But what about here: are we closed off completely from venturing into all parts of this matter? It is clear that God intends to share some ideas here with mankind, as He did record certain statements about this event in His Torah, given to all mankind, and to all generations.

Maimonides’ son Abraham does say “for it is known and clear that He, praised be He, is not a body and has no relationship to location. However, even as this is so, He, praised be He, isolates certain places for honor.” Perhaps this is what Jacob found perplexing: the idea that God relates to “place”. For this appears as a contradiction to all

we know about our bodiless God who does not relate to place. The fact that God did relate to a certain place regarding Moses and here regarding Jacob, is a “wondrous principle” which seems to somewhat oppose the Torah fundamental of God’s incorporeality.

Although we do not know this principle, we can at least, appreciate the problem of God isolating certain “places” for honor. And we must stress that is only for His “honor”, and nothing to do with God essentially, Whose essence is unknowable. Our Kedusha too emphasizes “Milo kol haarezt kovodo”, “The entire Earth is filled with His honor”. (If this is so, that the “entire” Earth is filled with His honor, how are certain places distinguished? I do not know.)

Perhaps as well, this is the reason for the Torah’s numerous repetitions of that word “place”. We are being directed to the very issue. Jacob is certainly astonished at this idea.

Making a monument of the very stone that at first Jacob used as shelter, Jacob thereby declares some new principle about “place” as it relates to God’s honor. Therefore, the mention of that stone at the beginning and end of this account, is essential for teaching how Jacob at first related to “place” in one fashion, but ultimately realized a new fundamental, and expressed this idea by taking that very stone and anointing it...and distinguishing that place. He also renames that place for this reason.

### The Ladder

God standing “above” the ladder indicates that He is not “on” the ladder. The ladder represents the relationship between God and His creation. But that relationship is via angels...not through Him directly. He stands “above” or “outside” that relationship. God cannot relate directly to physical matter. Rabbi Chaim Ozer Chait once taught in Ibn Ezra’s name that the necessity for angels is just that: vehicles (angels or agents) through which God relates to the physical world. This corroborates Maimonides’ son Abraham’s commentary. Ibn Ezra also teaches that “Matters of below (on Earth) depend on what is on high; as if a ladder is between them”. (Gen. 28:12) This teaches a second idea: that the physical universe is subordinate to the world of the metaphysical. Proof of this is that God’s will alters natural law.

Therefore, the ladder offers two lessons: 1) that a relationship exists between God and His creation, and that relationship is only via angels, not directly connected to Him, Who cannot relate to the physical world. Only physical objects can relate to the physical world. 2) the physical world is subordinate to the metaphysical world.

Why is Jacob – as opposed to any other – being taught these lessons? What is the necessity for man, that God distinguishes certain places for His honor? As the Rabbis taught above, unless God tells us, this is a matter that will remain unknown to us, as it appears to contradict God’s metaphysical nature. Through Jacob’s astonishment we learn that it is surprising that God selects a location for His honor. Nonetheless, this account reiterates what we do know as true: God is not physical. A Torah fundamental. ■

[1] The idea is, I believe, that God will allow those deserving of death to live, although justice demands their death. God allows this, as He intimated to Abraham, since there are sufficient righteous people who might improve the wicked. But such an idea, man cannot recognize through his own mind. That is why God says “Will I keep concealed from Abraham...?” But man – without God’s providential education – will not arrive at this reality of God’s generosity, but he will assume that those deserving of death meet with death. No exceptions.







# *When a Tzaddik is Obligated to get Angry*

## *God's Honor*

Rabbi Reuven Mann  
*Rabbi-Cong. Rinat Yisrael Plainview, NY*

A careful and honest study of the Torah makes it absolutely clear that Judaism categorically rejects the possibility of “miracle workers”. In order to have a proper relationship with God, we must scrupulously avoid any attribution of “supernatural” power to mortals.

A fascinating episode in a recently read sedra (Vayetze) clearly illustrates this point. Rachel, who was childless, and envious of her sister Leah, pleaded with her husband to “give” her children or else she would die. Most of the commentators are puzzled with Jacob’s angry dismissal of his wife’s request. His lack of compassion and sensitivity to Rachel’s emotional distress seems incomprehensible. Very surprising, as well, is his display of anger which is an emotion which the righteous must always avoid except in matters pertaining to heaven.

We must pay attention to the words of Jacob for they go to the heart of the matter at issue. The pasuk says “Jacob’s anger flared up at Rachel and he said ‘Am I in the place of God who has withheld from you fruit of the womb?’” The commentary of the Sforno is most illuminating. He says, “Jacob’s anger flared up for saying ‘Give me children’, implying that he had the power to do so. In his zeal for the honor of God, he disregarded his love for her.” Rabbi Raphael Pelcovitz in the notes appended to his translation of the Sforno explains, “Jacob was angry with Rachel for saying ‘Give me’ not ‘Pray for me’”. The latter request would have been proper, the former was not since it implied that Jacob had the power to grant that which only God can give.....His great zeal for God’s honor, however, caused him to set aside his feelings of love for Rachel, for his love for God was greater.”

Jacob who ranks among the greatest of men displayed anger at any implication that he had the power to change the natural order of events. This type of overestimation of man violates the honor that is due exclusively to the Creator. The true tzaddik is the one, who like Yaakov Avinu, reacts with anger to even the slightest suggestion that he has transcended the bounds of human limitations and shares a power, which is exclusively that of the Creator. ■

## News



## WorldNEWS

December 5th, 2008

From combined news sources



## Nanny describes saving child in Mumbai attack

JERUSALEM (CNN) -- The world knows her as the daring nanny who, clutching a 2-year-old boy, pushed past the havoc in a terrorized Mumbai and risked her life to keep the toddler safe.

But Sandra Samuel sees no heroism in her actions amid last week's terror attacks on India's financial capital that killed nearly 180 people -- including baby Moshe's parents, Rabbi Gavriel Holtzberg and his wife, Rivka. She only wishes she could have done more.

"Even today, I am thinking I should have sent the baby and done something for the rabbi and his wife," Samuel told CNN in an exclusive television interview in Israel, where she now lives.

Samuel and Moshe were among the few to make it out of the Chabad House alive after gunmen stormed the Jewish center, killing the Holtzbergs and four others.

Israel's Chabad movement has set up a fund to provide for Moshe's care. He is being looked after by members of the community, although who will serve as his guardian has not yet been established.

The nanny says she came face to face with a gunman late Wednesday, the first night of the siege. "I saw one man was shooting at me -- he shot at me."

She slammed a door and hid in a first-floor storage room and attempted to reach the rabbi and the others on the second floor.

Overnight, Samuel frantically tried to call for help as gunfire and grenade blasts shook the Chabad House.

Samuel says she emerged early the next afternoon, when she heard Moshe calling for her. She found the child crying as he stood between his parents, who she says appeared unconscious but still alive.

Based on the marks on Moshe's back, she believes he was struck so hard by a gunman that he fell unconscious at some point as well.

"First thing is that a baby is very important for me and this baby is something very precious to me and that's what made me just not think anything -- just pick up the baby and run," Samuel said.

"When I hear gunshot, it's not one or 20. It's like a hundred gunshots," she added. "Even I'm a mother of two children so I just pick up the baby and run. Does anyone think of dying at the moment when there's a small,

precious baby?"

Outside, chaos flooded the streets as people tried to make sense of the massacre that killed at least 179 people and wounded 300 others. Ultimately, she and Moshe reached safety at the home of an Israeli consul before arriving in Israel, where she is considered a hero.

In the aftermath of the attacks, Moshe asked for his mother continuously, Samuel says, and he is learning to play again -- though he likes the nanny close by. And while she still has nightmares of the horrific siege that took hold of Mumbai, Samuel, a non-Jew and native of India, said she will stay in Israel for as long as Moshe needs her.

"Yes, yes, they said it is important I am here," she said. "Me, I just take care of the baby." ■

## Other News

### High alert in West Bank following Beit Hashalom evacuation

Settler allegedly shoots Palestinian man and son; IDF fears spiraling violence; access to Temple Mt. prayers limited.

### PA praises evacuation of Hebron home

Officials call on Israel to evacuate all settlers from city; Palestinians warn violence could spread.

### Herzog taking lead in race for 2nd place

MKs Yacimovich, Braverman battle it out over third place in Labor list; 14% of votes counted by 3 a.m.

### Yishai: Barak playing politics in Hebron

Defense minister, prime minister praise "efficient" evacuation forces; Livni: Law must be respected.

### 'Surprise led to swift evacuation'

Police were met with little resistance, but feared evacuees would attack Palestinians as revenge.

### 'New teams must proceed with Annapolis'

UN envoy: Obama should support what Israelis, Palestinians have been trying to do from the start.

### Olmert's Leumi probe case closed

State Prosecutor Lador: Only evidence beyond reasonable doubt can lead to conviction.

## Save on gas and see the latest traffic reports right on your desktop.

Get the free 5Bucks widget:  
**www.5BucksAGallon.com**





## Advertise

# “Clickable”

## We're talking about our ads.

Our ads actually link to your emails or websites. “Click” on any JewishTimes ad to see how this works. Better yet...**Click Here** to visit our advertising page to learn how you can benefit.



## Funding for small to medium sized, private or public companies.

Private Transactions  
Reverse Mergers  
Block Trades  
Convertibles  
Stock Loans  
Shells  
Pipes  
IPOs



# Salamon Brothers

**516.371.9440****howard@salamonbrothers.com**

- Corporate Identity
- Website Design
- Marketing
- Advertising
- Fund Raising
- Package Design
- Presentations
- Flash Animations
- Business Plans

**516.569.8888 info@NYDesign.com****Where Good Design is Smart Business**

**Save up to 35%**  
on all orders placed before  
December 31st.

**www.homelightingfixture.com**

Wall sconces, chandeliers, hanging lights, pendants, floor lamps,  
table lamps, and many imported and hand blown glass shades.

