

PARSHAT VAYEITZEI 2020 – SOURCE SHEET

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*This week's Parsha Shiur is sponsored by
Aaron & Lillian Fuchs and Jason Fuchs
in memory of Lillian's brother & Jason's uncle
Jack Julius Glatter, Yaakov Yehudah ben Yitzchak z"l
whose yahrtzeit is on 14 Kislev*

1. BEREISHIT 28:11/18 – YAAKOV FINDS A PLACE TO REST HIS HEAD

וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם וַיָּלֶן שָׁם כִּי בָא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא. וַיִּשְׁכֶּם יַעֲקֹב
בַּבֹּקֶר וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר שָׁם מִרְאֲשֵׁתוֹ וַיִּשָּׂם אֹתָהּ מִצְבָּה וַיִּצַק שָׁמֶן עַל רֹאשָׁהּ.

He came upon a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking from the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on the top of it.

2. RASHI – FROM STONES TO STONE

וישם מראשותיו. עשאן כמין מרזב סביב לראשו, שגרא מפני חיות רעות; התחילו מריבות זו את זו, זאת אומרת עלי יניח צדיק את ראשו וזאת אומרת עלי יניח; מגד עשאן הקב"ה אבן אחת, וזהו שגאמר ויקח את האבן אשר שם מראשתיו:

AND PUT THEM FOR A RESTING PLACE FOR HIS HEAD — He arranged them in the form of a gutter around his head because he was afraid of wild animals (Gen. Rab. 68:11). They (the stones) began quarrelling with one another. One said, "Let this righteous man rest his head on me", and the other one said "let him rest it on me". So d immediately made them into one stone! This explains what it means when the verse says (Gen. 28:18), "And he took the stone that he had put under his head" (Chullin 91b).

3. KLI YAKAR – ONE PLACE FOR ALL TWELVE TRIBES

ויקח מאבני המקום וישם מראשותיו וגוי. אחר שנודע לו כי מקום זה יהיה בית אלקים המכהה לגל חמה, על כן לקח מן אבני המקום וישם אותם שומר לראשו להראות חבת הקודש שעליהן ... ולקח י"ב אבנים כנגד י"ב שבטים כדאיתא במדרש (בר"ר סח יא) והיו האבנים מריבות כל אחד אמר עלי יניח צדיק ראשו עד שנעשו לאבן אחת, רמז לעתיד על דרך שכתב הרב המורה שלכך העלים הקב"ה מקום זה שיהיה מקום מקדש והיכל מלך כדי שלא יהיה מריבה בין השבטים כי כל שבט ירצה במקום המקודש ההוא ... שבשעה שקנה דוד את הגורן מן ארונה היבوسی גבה את הכסף מכל השבטים ... וא"כ מריבה זו שהיתה בין האבנים ונעשו לסוף אבן אחת זה היה אות ומופת על העתיד ... כי כל שבט יאמר עלי יניח צדיקו של עולם ראשו זה בית המקדש ... ולסוף נעשו לאבן אחת ע"י שגבה דוד הזהב מן כולם.

5. SHEM MISHMUEL

במד"ר (פי ס"ח) י"ב אבנים נטל, אמר כך גזר הקב"ה שהוא מעמיד י"ב שבטים, אברהם לא העמידם, יצחק לא העמידם, אני אם מתאחות הן וכו' יודע אני שאני מעמיד י"ב שבטים. וכבר אמרנו לפרש עפ"י מה שהגיד כ"ק אבי אדומו"ר זצלה"ה דכל היכי שצריך להתאחד אם מתאחד עמם דבר זר שאינו ראוי להתאחד ביניהם מקלקל את ההתאחדות אפי' מן הראויים, ודייק לה מהא דש"ס סנהדרין (פ"ח א) דאי לולב צריך אגד אם מוסיף מין זר גרוע ועומד הוא, דשוב אינו אגד כלל. והנה י"ב שבטים הם מתאחדים כמ"ש (דברים ל"ג) ויהי בישורון מלך בהתאסף וגו' והם יחד כאיש אחד, כעולם אחד, וכמו י"ב מזלות שברקיע, וי"ב ר"ח, ואם יצויר פירוד בקישור המזלות יחרב העולם, כן י"ב שבטי ישורון. אך אי אפשר להתאחד רק כשכולם בטלים אל הש"י, אבל אם הם בריות נפרדות א"א שיהיו כולם אגודה אחת. וכמו שהגיד כ"ק אבי אדומו"ר זצלה"ה בפ"י מה ביאתן למדבר סיני בתשובה, אף דגם ביאתן למדבר סיני אינו מפורש שהיתה בתשובה, אך זה הפ"י מדכתיב ויחן שם ישראל כאיש אחד בלב אחד וזה בלתי אפשר אלא כשהם בתשובה. ומעתה יובן מדוע אברהם לא העמידן ויצחק לא העמידן, שבאשר יצאה מהם פסולת היתה הפסולת מקלקלת את האחדות. וע"כ לא הולידו אברהם ויצחק אלא אחד אחד צדיק, כי אי אפשר שיהיו יותר מאחד שהרי היו בלתי מתאחדין, וממילא לא היתה עליהם השראת השכינה כנ"ל ויהי בישורון מלך. ולפ"י יובן שעשה יעקב לסימן אם מתאחדות זו לזו אני יודע שאני מעמידן, שהרי ההתאחדות מורה על הביטול לזה שנגלה עליהם כבמדרש בסמוך ובפ"י מת"כ שם. וכ"ק אבי אדומו"ר זצלה"ה פירש שמה שלא נתאחדו כל האבנים שהיו שם אלא מה שהיו תחת מראשותיו, היינו כענין שאמרו ז"ל (פסחים פ"ג א) עצמות שמשו נותר, וכן אבנים אלו שמשו את יעקב השיגו במקצת מעלת יעקב ע"כ הרגישו ונתפעלו, עכת"ד. ולי יש להוסיף בזה מעט דברים, שכל שם יעקב הוא ע"ש עקב שמורה על ביטול ליו"ד שבראש שמו, וע"כ האבנים שנתאחדו הוא מחמת ענין הביטול שבו, ואם האבנים שתחתיו כן בניו עאכו"כ, ומוכרח שלא תהי' בהן פסולת כנ"ל, וע"כ יעמיד י"ב השבטים מה שאברהם ויצחק לא העמידו:

The beginning of the Torah portion described Yaakov's departure from Be'er Sheva and his famous dream of the ladder. Before he lay down to sleep, we learn: "He took some of the stones from the place, and he set it under his head..." (Bereishis 28:11). But after he had dreamed and awoken, we discover: "He took the stone which he had set under his head and erected it as a monument..." (Ibid. 18). The Midrash notes the discrepancy between the two verses (was it one or many stones?) and assumes that the many stones actually became one: "Rabbi Yehudah said: "He took 12 stones, as God had decreed that he would establish 12 tribes. Yaakov said, 'Avraham didn't establish them. Yitzchak didn't establish them. As for me, if the 12 stones become one, then I will know that I will establish 12 tribes.' When the 12 stones became one, he knew that he would establish 12 tribes." (Gen. Rabb. 68:11)

To begin to understand this, let us consider one aspect of unity: how it is destroyed. My holy father said that it is a fundamental principle of unity that if one adds something to a complete set, not only does the set have an alien member, but it is spoiled entirely. For example, our Sages indicate that if one needs to bind together the *arba minim*, the Four Species we wave on Sukkot, we can assume that the tied bundle forms a discrete entity. If so, the addition of an extra item, for example, a banana, will completely ruin the nature of the bundle. It will not be *arba minim* plus a banana, but rather nothing of value at all.

We may apply this principle to the nature of the 12 tribes. The Torah tells us: "And there was a king in Yeshurun when the heads of the people gathered the tribes of Yisrael together." (Devarim 33:5) The Torah here describes *Klal Yisrael* as a united entity - a perfect and complete national body. Adding to it or subtracting from it will spoil its uniqueness and beauty. Together, working in harmony, Yisrael is a world unto itself, pulsating with the vibrancy of unity. Indeed, the number twelve is used to indicate completeness on a grand scale: there are twelve zodiac signs, twelve months of the year, and, to correspond, twelve tribes of Yisrael.

If there were some interference or attempt at adding to the heavenly array, a disaster of cosmic proportions would ensue. So too, if any addition or subtraction were to befall *Klal Yisrael*, then its very purpose would be frustrated. *Klal Yisrael* comprises many different people, each with their own distinct personality. How, then, is this prized unity to be achieved and maintained? Each member of the nation must subjugate his own needs and desires to those of God. In this way alone can true unity be achieved, enabling the *klal* to function as one organism with a single overall purpose.

Perhaps we can suggest why Avraham and Yitzchak were unable to be the direct progenitors of the twelve tribes and of *Klal Yisrael*. Avraham produced Yishmael, and Yitzchak produced Eisav, each of whom could not continue in his father's footsteps. But in addition, each produced a son who did continue the link, namely Yitzchak and Yaakov. But this meant that both Avraham and Yitzchak had fathered a set of two children, one good and one bad. There could be no unity in either group, for as we have seen, the existence of an alien entity within the group spoils its very nature. There was, in fact, no purpose in them having more than one good son, for once there was no possibility of creating the unified set which comprises *Klal Yisrael*, then further offspring could achieve nothing. Unity, we have said, is a *prerequisite* for proper Jewish existence, and certainly a requirement *ab initio* for the establishment of *Klal Yisrael*. Therefore, neither Avraham nor Yitzchak had a chance of establishing the twelve tribes. That required an entirely different person: Yaakov, our Forefather.

When Yaakov left his parental home to find a wife and to fulfill his life's mission, he wanted to know whether or not he would be blessed with success. So when he lay down to sleep, he performed the test described in the midrash above. The unification of the stones would indicate to him whether he, in contrast to his father and grandfather, would become the progenitor of *Klal Yisrael*. Unity, as we have mentioned, points to subjugation of the individual's needs to that of the *klal*. Yaakov knew that if the stones joined together, then this would symbolize that he would father the tribes - *tzaddikim* who could unify, without any division or alien intrusion, and form the basis of *Klal Yisrael*.

6. RABBI AARON GOLDSCHIEDER – STARBUCKS AND THE LESSON OF JACOB'S PILLOW (AISH.COM)

The sun is setting, and Jacob rests his head after a harrowing day. He is fleeing from his brother Esau. In an open field Jacob gathers stones and makes a pillow of sorts so he can sleep before moving on in the morning. Amazingly, the Midrash describes a "fight" that breaks out between the stones Jacob has gathered. Rashi (Genesis 28:11) says the following: 'The stones began to quarrel with each other, one saying, "Upon me shall the righteous Jacob place his head", and the other said, "Let him lay upon me." Immediately the Holy One Blessed Be He made them into one stone.' This teaching is quite fanciful. What did the Sages intend to convey in presenting this dramatic 'dialogue' between the stones?

The CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, describes a meeting he had with one of the outstanding and noble sages of Jerusalem, Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, dean of the Mir Yeshiva. Together with a group of leading American businessmen they took the time to learn from one of the outstanding Torah leaders.

Rabbi Finkel first brought up the topic of the Holocaust and he asked: "Who can tell me the lesson of the Holocaust?" One fellow said that the lesson is – "Never to forget," another called out "Never again be a bystander to evil."

The saintly Rabbi looked at the group and said, “What you have said is true – but we learned something far more important - we learned something about the human spirit. As you know, during the Holocaust, Jews were transported in the worst possible, inhumane way by rail car to the death camps. After hours and hours in the inhumane corral with no light, no bathrooms and extreme cold, they arrived at the death camps. The doors swung wide open and those exiting the cattle cars were now blinded by the light. Men were separated from women, mothers from their daughters, fathers from their sons. They went off to the bunkers to sleep. As they went into the bunker to sleep, only one person was given a blanket for every six. The person who received the blanket had to decide, ‘Am I going to push the blanket to the five other people who did not get one, or am I going to pull it toward myself and stay warm?’”

Rabbi Finkel turned to us and said: “It was during this defining moment that we learned the power of the human spirit, because we pushed the blanket to the others.” The saintly rabbi then said to us: “Take your blanket – push it to five others who need it.”

When the Sages pictured Jacob’s cold and fearful night and his lying down to find some rest – they imagined the stones “quarreling with each other” – each one wanting to be the first to give of himself and provide comfort for a lonely and frightened soul. This evocative image suggests how we need to respond to those who may be frightened, alone, or are just in need of a friend. The Midrash teaches us to say: “You can lean on me. I am here for you.” Jacob gathered exactly twelve stones - a symbol of the twelve tribes of Israel (Ramban, Genesis 28:19). When every sector of Jewish people deeply cares for one another we become a cohesive and unified entity, we become “one stone.” Bound as one, we then have an extraordinary ability to bring warmth, comfort and blessing to the world around us. With the same stone our father Jacob rested that fateful night he builds an altar to offer gratitude to God. This very spot is deemed holy for all time: “This is the entrance to heaven.” (Gen. 28:17). On these hallowed grounds – this place fertile with kindness, concern and gratitude - the great Temple in Jerusalem is built.

7. RAV SIMCHA SCHEPPS (1908-1998) – IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN TWELVE TO ONE (TORAH.ORG)

It would have been more logical to request a symbolic sign that he would be the father of a 12-tribe nation by taking a single stone and having it turn into 12 stones by the next morning. Yaakov’s symbolism seems counter-intuitive. Twelve stones joining to form one stone appears to symbolize just the reverse of the sign he was looking for.

There is a second Midrash. When God told Avraham “I will make you into a great nation” (Gen. 12:2) Avraham asked Him “but you already have 70 nations who are descended from Noah, what will be so special about another nation?” God answered: “The nation that will descend from you is the nation about whom it will be said *ki mi goy gadol* – ‘For which is such a great nation?’ (Deut. 4:7) – that is the nation that will emerge from you.”

What is the meaning of *goy gadol* (which actually means ‘big nation’)? If it’s about size, the *goy gadol* in the world today is the Chinese nation – 1.3 billion. There are more Chinese in the world than any other people. The second largest nationality is Indians – 1 billion. But there are only approximately 13 million Jews in the world – a fraction.

In fact, we have never been the world's *goy gadol* at any time in our history. In which case, what does the Midrash mean? What is this peculiar dialog between Avraham and God?

The answer is that there is a special connotation to the word *gadol*. It does not just mean 'big' as in numerically large. Rav Dessler says that the meaning of *gadol* is revealed to us when it first appears in the Torah (Gen. 1:16): *es haMaor haGadol* (the great light, referring to the sun). *Gadol* means the ability to give to others. The sun is not called *gadol* because it is so big. The sun is called *gadol* because it provides light and heat for the world.

The technical definition of *gadol* is the capacity to do for others, to help others, to be concerned about others. When we talk about an *Adam Gadol* (a person who is a *gadol*), we are not speaking about size, or even erudition. Every *Adam Gadol* who we can think of was a person that was always concerned about the community. That is the definition of a *Gadol*.

Now we can understand the dialog between Avraham and God. There are plenty of nations in the world. There are lots of Chinese and lots of Indians. However, God promised Avraham that he would make his descendants into a nation that is *gadol*, by which he meant a nation of people that care about others and have the capacity to give to others and to the world.

And this idea also applies to Yaakov Avinu when he says, "If I take 12 stones and they become one, this symbolizes a nation that has unity amongst themselves." If there is unity between people (*achdus*), the members of this nation are not just concerned about themselves, but they are also concerned about others. When people are only into themselves, there is disunity. There is no *achdus*. Yaakov knew that the appropriate sign that he would be the progenitor of the *Goy Gadol* promised to Avraham is for him to take 12 stones that would turn into one, demonstrating this property of unity and the capacity for caring for one another.