

BS"D
To: parsha@groups.io
From: Chaim Shulman <cshulman@gmail.com>

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYISHLACH - 5787

parsha@groups.io / www.parsha.net - in our 32nd year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to http://www.parsha.net and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to parsha+subscribe@groups.io Please also copy me at cshulman@gmail.com We also have a WhatsApp group: email me to be added. A complete archive of previous issues is now available at http://www.parsha.net It is also fully searchable.

Sponsored in memory of
Chaim Yissachar z"l ben yb"l Yechiel Zaydel Dov

To make a dedication or sponsor a weekly parsha sheet, contact me at cshulman@gmail.com (write sponsor or dedication in subject line). If I don't respond, send me a reminder.

Table of Contents:

- The Steipler Gaon on Why Avraham Is No Longer Avram, but Yisrael Is Still Yaakov
- Rav Yissocher Frand: Distancing from Evil Without Losing Hope
- כמוצא שלל רב on Gid Hanasheh in Female Animals
- Women and Tefillah: Which Parts of Davening to Say?
- R' Rivlin Why Yaakov Was Punished for Hiding Dinah
- R' Dovid Hofstedter on the Secret of Jewish Survival in Galus
- Yalkut Lekach Tov on קטנתי מכל החסדים
- R' YY Jacobson: the World's Obsession with Israel & Chosenness

---

Why Avraham Is No Longer Avram, but Yisrael Is Still Yaakov
Translated from ***Kuntres Chayei Olam*** (printed in *Birkas Peretz*) **by Rav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, the Steipler Gaon** (1899–1985).
The Gemara (Berachos 13a) teaches that one who calls Avraham Avinu by his original name, Avram, violates a positive commandment: והיה שמך אברהם (Lech Lecha 17:5) - *your name shall be Avraham.* R. Eliezer holds that he violates a negative commandment: ולא יקרא עוד את שמך אברם - *your name shall no longer be called Avram.*
The Gemara asks: if so, why may Yaakov Avinu still be called Yaakov? Hashem told him as well, לא יקרא שמך עוד יעקב כי אם ישראל יהיה שמך (Vayishlach 35:10) - *your name shall no longer be Yaakov; Yisrael shall be your name.* The Gemara answers that the Torah itself later calls him Yaakov: ויאמר יעקב יעקב (Vayigash 46:2). But this only moves the question back a step. Why was Avraham's old name completely replaced, while Yaakov kept both?
Perhaps the difference lies in who named them. Yaakov was named by his father, Yitzchak Avinu, and פעולת צדיק לחיים (Mishlei 10:16) - *the deeds of a tzaddik endure* and should not be annulled. Avram was named by his father, Terach, so it was fitting that the name be superseded.
A Permanent Transformation or a Temporary Victory?
Another explanation is possible. When Hashem renamed Avram, He explained: כי אב המון גוים נתתיך (Lech Lecha 17:5) - *for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations.* This greatness was a permanent and unconditional gift. The new name reflected a fundamental change in his status, and so the old name was displaced entirely.
When the *malach* gave Yaakov the name Yisrael, however, he explained: כי שרית עם אלקים ועם אנשים ותוכל (Vayishlach 32:29) - *for you have struggled with Divine beings and with men, and have prevailed.* Yaakov had overcome the *malach* and had been saved from Esav and Lavan, but these victories did not promise an end to suffering. Indeed, he later endured the tragedy of Dinah and the long anguish of Yosef's disappearance. The new name commemorated his victories, not the end of his struggles, so Yisrael was added to Yaakov rather than replacing it.
Avraham's Victory Over the Yetzer Hara
The distinction runs deeper still. The Gemara (Nedarim 32b) explains that Hashem first gave Avraham mastery over 243 of his limbs, the numerical value of אברם, and ultimately over all 248, the value of אברהם. The five additional organs are the two eyes, the two ears and the reproductive organ. The Rishonim explain that because of Avraham's extraordinary righteousness, Hashem gave him mastery even over faculties a person does not ordinarily control completely, so that they would function only according to His will. The Rosh (ad loc.) calls this a fulfillment of רגלי חסידיו ישמור (Shmuel I 2:9) - *He guards the feet of His faithful ones.*
Similarly, the Yerushalmi (Berachos 9:5) teaches: אברהם אבינו עשה יצר הרע טוב - *Avraham Avinu made his yetzer hara good.* Dovid HaMelech, by contrast, killed his *yetzer hara* through fasting, as he says, ולבי חלל בקרבי (Tehillim 109:22) - *my heart is slain within me.* The Gemara (Bava Basra 17a) likewise teaches that the *yetzer hara* had no dominion over Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.
Avraham's new name thus reflected a permanent spiritual attainment, a Divine assurance that he would not succumb to sin. Because the name Avraham represented an enduring reality, the name Avram was entirely displaced. Yaakov Avinu also attained extraordinary mastery over his *yetzer hara*, but the name Yisrael was given for a different reason: his victory over the external forces that sought to overcome him.
The Unfinished Victory of Yaakov Avinu
The victory commemorated by the name Yisrael must be understood in terms of the entire history of Yaakov's descendants. The Ramban explains that Yaakov's encounter with Esav foreshadowed the experience of Klal Yisrael in every generation: forces arise to destroy us, and Hashem saves us from their hands.
The same is true of the struggle for the survival of the Torah itself. In every generation, enemies of the Torah arise from within and from without. They have taken many forms: the Tzedukim, the Misyavnim, philosophical movements, the Haskalah, socialist labor ideology and the countless false *meshichim*. Yet Hashem continues to

preserve us.
These victories, however, have never been complete. Although the *malach* could not overcome Yaakov, ויגע בכף ירכו (Vayishlach 32:26) - *he struck the socket of his thigh.* The Ramban (ad loc.), citing Bereishis Rabbah (77:3), explains: נגע בכל הצדיקים שעתידין להיות ממנו זה דורו של שמד - *he struck all the tzaddikim destined to descend from him; this is the generation of persecution.* The thigh alludes to Yaakov's descendants, יוצאי ירכו. The *malach* could not defeat Yaakov himself, but he could inflict suffering on his children.
The Ramban explains that in some generations Esav would gain such ascendancy that he would nearly uproot the descendants of Yaakov entirely, as in the generation of R. Yehudah ben Bava and his fellow Tannaim, who suffered terribly at the hands of Rome. He adds these remarkable words: ויש דורות אחרים שעשו עמנו כזה ויותר רע מזה והכל סבלנו ועבר עלינו כמו שרמז ויבא יעקב שלם - *there have been other generations that did the same to us and worse, and we endured it all and it passed over us, as alluded to in "Yaakov arrived whole"* (Vayishlach 33:18).
Klal Yisrael survives, but not without terrible losses. This is also the meaning of Yaakov's words: אם יבוא עשו אל המחנה האחת והכהו והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה (Vayishlach 32:9) - *if Esav comes to one camp and strikes it, the remaining camp will escape.* The Ramban (ad loc.) cites Bereishis Rabbah (76:3) that the first camp alludes to אחינו שבדרום - *our brethren in the south*, and the surviving camp to אחינו שבגולה - *our brethren in the Diaspora.* The survival of Klal Yisrael is assured, even when individual communities suffer devastating losses.

When the Victory of Yisrael Will Be Complete

This explains why the name Yaakov was never displaced by Yisrael. Although Yaakov prevailed over the *malach* of Esav, that night's victory was not the final one. His descendants would still suffer for generations at the hands of Esav, והידים ידי עשו (Toldos 27:22) - *the hands are the hands of Esav.* Throughout the long *galus*, Klal Yisrael bears both names. We are Yisrael, because Esav can never destroy us, and we remain Yaakov, because we still suffer at his hands.
The victory will be complete only עד כי יבא שילה (Vayechi 49:10) - *when Mashiach comes*, when the prophecy of Ovadiah (1:21) is fulfilled: ועלו מושיעים בהר ציון לשפוט את הר עשו והיתה לה' המלוכה - *deliverers will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esav, and the kingship will be Hashem's.*
May we merit the speedy coming of the Goel Tzedek, when the struggle will finally end, and ויהיה השם שלם והכסא שלם - *Hashem's Name and His Throne will be complete* (see Rashi, Beshalach 17:16).

---

from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org>
to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Nov 24, 2026

Rav Yissocher Frand - Distance Yourself from Evil, and Never Lose Hope

Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter's Chavrusah on MP3 player or flashdrive, from Yad Yechiel This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on Parshas Vayishlach: #1491 – Learning T'nach at Night? Good Shabbos!
Parshas Vayishlach contains the infamous incident with Dina bas Leah. Dina went out to see the daughters of the land. The pasuk says that Shechem, the son of Chamor, from the city of Shechem, the prince of the land, saw Dina and he violated her. Then the whole incident occurred of Shimon and Levi taking revenge for this brazen horrible act.
Rashi famously comments on Dina bas Leah, asking, "And not the daughter of Yaakov?" Wasn't she also the daughter of Yaakov? Why does the pasuk attribute her only to Leah? Rashi says that because of her going out, she is called the daughter of Leah, because Leah too was accustomed to going out, as it says, "And Leah went out to meet him."
Rashi, over here, based on Chazal, criticizes both Leah and Dina, referring to both of them as a yatzanis, a woman who goes out frequently, an out-and-about person, which was a slight deficiency according to Rashi, because that is not how a bas Yisroel should conduct herself. She should not mingle among the people. Rashi is, in effect, saying, like mother, like daughter, or to use another expression, the apple does not fall far from the tree.
However, there's an interesting Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer (Perek 38) that has a whole different take on this story with Dina. The Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer begins with a pasuk in Amos: "Uba habayis" (He came into the house), "vesamach yado al hakir" (and leaned his hand on the wall), "uneshacho nachash" (and a snake bit him). Obviously, it's an allegorical pasuk, but the gist of the pasuk is that Yaakov came to the house, he put his hand on the wall, and the snake bit him. What does this Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer mean?
"When Yaakov came into the house" refers to him entering Eretz Yisrael, which is his rightful achuza (inheritance), and it is considered his home. The snake bit Yaakov. Who's the snake that bites Yaakov that the pasuk is referring to? This is Shechem, son of Chamor, who violated the daughter of Yaakov.
There's a peirush (commentary) on the Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer from the Radal, who writes as follows:
When Yaakov moved back to Eretz Yisroel, he did not want to live among the people of Shechem because Shechem was a bad city with bad people, with prutzim (licentious) and promiscuous, wanton people. So rather than living in the city, he bought property adjacent to Shechem, where he pitched his tent and established his home. According to the Radal, the Medrash is saying that Yaakov appears to have foreseen through ruach hakodesh (Divine inspiration) that the Chivite snake would provoke him in this place. Chivya means snake in Aramaic. Yaakov Avinu did not live in Shechem proper because he knew that he would be bitten by a snake there. Therefore, he distanced himself, encamping outside the city, on the parcel that he had purchased. Nevertheless, when he leaned his hand on the wall, the snake bit him. He didn't move far enough away. Yaakov was still too close. Although he had moved to the outskirts, the analogy is that he put his hand against the wall and the nachash bit him. That's how the Radal interprets the Medrash.
The Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer is saying different than Rashi. Dina was not a yatzanis. She was not out and about. In fact, according to the Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer, she was sitting inside the tent. She was a tzenius'dike (modest) girl. However, Shechem ben Chamor wanted her. So what did Shechem do? He brought playful girls outside, playing b'tupim u'mecholos (with drums and dances), like it was a parade. Dina, who normally doesn't leave the confines of her own home, sees all these women with a band having a good time. They're singing, and dancing. Dina went out to see the girls who were playing, to see what's going on, and Shechem seized her, lay with her, and violated her. And what happened? Unfortunately, she became pregnant from that encounter and she gave birth to a girl,

whose name was Osnas.
The Ramban asks, so what happened to Dina? After this incident, she just falls off the map. According to the pshat (plain interpretation), she remained bound to her brothers, living in widowhood. She, in fact, remained a spinster the rest of her life. Why? Because she was considered defiled in their eyes. She was embarrassed and she was shunned by society, as it is written, "because he defiled Dina their sister." Our Sages disagreed about her, but the view closest to the truth is that Dina stayed with Shimon the rest of her life. She never married. She never lived a normal life. She went down with them to Mitzrayim and there she died. Shimon took her up, buried her in Eretz Yisroel. Her burial place is known until this very day, in the city of Arbel, next to the kever (grave) of Nittai Ha'arbeli.
I was in Lakewood this week and a yungerman named Reb Yaakov Slatus came over to me with a ha'arah (observation). Many of you know him. His father is a rov (rabbi) in Savannah, Georgia. He asked, why is Dina buried – of all places – next to Nittai Ha'arbeli? He shared a very interesting ha'arah, which I want to be mosif (add) on a little, but the ha'arah is his.
How many times is Nittai Ha'arbeli mentioned in Shas? Once [or twice]. Where is Nittai Ha'arbeli mentioned in Shas? In a Mishna in Pirkei Avos. What does Nittai Ha'arbeli say in Pirkei Avos? Nittai Ha'arbeli says, distance yourself from a bad neighbor, do not associate with a rasha (wicked person), and don't give up hope in the face of tzoros (troubles), in the face of puranios.
Rabbi Slatus explains, that is why Dina is buried next to Nittai Ha'arbeli. According to this Pirkei D'Rebbe Eliezer, what was Yaakov's mistake? The Radal explains that Yaakov lived outside of Shechem, but not far enough away. Neshacho nachash because he wasn't sufficiently harchek mishachen ra (distant from a bad neighbor). You need to run the other way. And that is why Dina is buried next to Nittai Ha'arbeli. That was his ha'arah.
My son Yakov was mosif another ha'arah. How is the conclusion of Nittai Ha'arbeli's statement about not giving up in the face of tzoros related to this Pirkei d'Rebbe Eliezer?
The Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer says that the other children wanted to kill Osnas. She was like a living shame to the house of Yaakov. Now the whole world will say there is immorality in the tents of Yaakov. So what did Yaakov do with his granddaughter, Dina's daughter? He wrote the shem hakodesh (the holy name) on a tzitz (plate) and made a necklace out of it. Osnas wore it. Yaakov sent her away out of his house.
Everything is revealed before Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Michael Hamalach came and brought her down to Mitzrayim, to the house of Potifera. Potifera adopts Osnas. The Pirkei d'Rebbe Eliezer says that Potifera's wife was barren and therefore she raised Osnas as a daughter. Osnas bas Potifera. Remember, what does Osnas have around her neck? The shem of Hashem. Osnas was destined to be Yosef's wife. Somehow or another, Osnas needs to marry Yosef. And later in Mitzrayim, Yosef did marry her, as it says, "He gave him Osnas daughter of Potifera, priest of Ohn, as a wife." Yosef married Dina's daughter.
What came out of that? Menashe and Ephraim, two of the shivtei Koh (the tribes of God). Nittai Ha'arbeli said, don't give up hope in the face of tzoros, in the face of puranios. Dina thought she had a miserable life, and she did. She was ne'ensa (violated), she was shunned, she was a pariah, and no one wanted to have to do with her. But the One who sees the end of all generations made sure that, somehow or another, Dina's daughter married Yosef Hatzaddik. As Nittai Ha'arbeli said, we see from Dina, al tisyayesh min hapuranios (do not despair in the face of troubles). However bad a person's life may seem, the Ribbono Shel Olam has his grand plan, and you may need to suffer through it, but in the end, the Ribbono Shel Olam obviously knows what he's doing.
That is why Dina is buried next to, of all people, Nittai Ha'arbeli, who says harchek mishachen ra, v'al tischaber l'rasha, v'al tisyayesh min hapuranios.

Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, Maryland; dhoffman@torah.org; Editor David Twersky; Jerusalem; Editor Emeritus This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. View a full listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Vayishlach.A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit http://www.yadyechiel.org/ for further information. Rav Frand © 2026 by Torah.org.
Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209

Gid Hanasheh in Female Animals: The Question That Shook the Torah World Adapted by CS from
כמוצא שלל רב by **Rav Avraham Yisroel Rosenthal**

על כן לא יאכלו בני ישראל את גיד הנשה אשר על כף הירך עד היום הזה – *therefore the Children of Israel do not eat the gid hanasheh that is upon the socket of the thigh to this day* (Vayishlach 32:33).

The Story

A story that Rav Yonasan Eybeschutz (1690–1764) records in his Kreisi u'Pleisi caused a storm in the Torah world of its time, because what Rav Eybeschutz wrote seemed so blatantly erroneous.
In the כרתי ופלתי (Yoreh De'ah 65, Kreisi s"k 16), Rav Eybeschutz records that there was a מנקר אחד אפילו בעל תורה ומומחה למאוד – *a porger (menaker) who was even a learned man and a great expert*, who became convinced that a different sinew was the true gid hanasheh. In his view, Klal Yisrael had been removing the wrong sinew for generations, and everyone up to his own day had eaten a sinew the Torah forbids. He travelled throughout Ashkenaz and alarmed people everywhere, until he came to Prague and presented his case to Rav Eybeschutz – the gadol hador – and the other rabbanim of the city.
Rav Yonasan writes ואני חקרתי ובדקתי את הדבר ומצאתי שזה הגיד אינו רק בבהמות זכרים ולא בבהמות נקבות – *I investigated and examined the matter and found that this sinew* that the menaker claims is the gid hanasheh *exists only in male animals and not in female animals* [perhaps the dorsal vein of the male אבר]. Rav Eybeschutz then showed him a "סמ"ג" stating דגיד הנשה נוהג בזכרים ונקבות – *that gid hanasheh applies to males and females*, ועל ידי כן אשתקל מילוליה – *and with that his claims were silenced*. Rav Eybeschutz's reasoning was simple. The Torah's gid hanasheh is found in cows as well as bulls. A sinew found only in bulls cannot be the one the Torah forbade.

The Uproar

When the כרתי ופלתי was printed, the Torah world was shaken again, this time by Rav Yonasan's proof. In the words of the Chasam Sofer (1762–1839), ורבים תמהו על שגגה גדולה שיצאה מהשליטים – *many were astonished at the great error that came forth from the leaders*. The objection was that even if the Semag stated that the mitzvah of gid hanasheh applies to males and females, such a statement would ordinarily refer to Jewish men and women, not to male and female animals.

In fact, as the Pardes Yosef (1875–1942) pointed out, ופלא שעד היום לא הביט שום אדם בסמ"ג גופא – *it is astonishing that until today no one looked inside the Semag itself*. In his treatment of gid hanasheh (Lavin 139), the Semag does not use the phrase בזכרים ונקבות at all. The astonishment ran so deep that Rav Yechezkel Feivel, in his Toldos Adam, concluded that the episode demonstrates that error is a net spread over all of life, even over a gadol hador such as Rav Yonasan Eybeschutz.

The First Answer: The Chasam Sofer's Pilpul

Even so, there were those who tried to resolve the difficulty, each in his own way.

The Chasam Sofer (Shu"t Yoreh De'ah 69) defends Rav Yonasan, beginning ואני אומר דברי חכמים קיימים – *and I say that the words of the Sages stand*. He starts with a question: the pasuk says לא יאכלו בני ישראל, and regarding semichah on korbanos we learn בני ישראל ולא בנות ישראל – *the sons of Israel and not the daughters of Israel* (Vayikra 1:2; Chagigah 16b). Why not exempt women from gid hanasheh as well? One might answer that this applies only to a mitzvas aseh, while for a lo sa'aseh, השוה הכתוב אשה לאיש לכל עונשין שבתורה – *the Torah equated women with men for all punishments in the Torah*. Yet the issur of tumah for kohanim is a lo sa'aseh, and there too we learn בני אהרן ולא בנות אהרן – *the sons of Aharon, and not the daughters of Aharon* (Emor 21:1).

The Chasam Sofer explains that kehunah is different, since kedushas kehunah itself gives a reason to distinguish between men and women. But if the gid were found only in male animals, there would similarly be a reason to limit the issur to men. Thus, if the Semag states that gid hanasheh applies to both men and women, one could infer that the gid is found in both male and female animals. Rav Yonasan's proof stands, and דברי חכמים קיימים.

The Second Answer: A Printer's Error

The Mishmeres Shalom, Rav Shalom Perlow (1850–1925) (Yoreh De'ah 65, cited in the Pardes Yosef), suggested that a printer's error had crept into the text: instead of סמ"ג it should read סה"ג, the *Sefer Halachos Gedolos*. In its discussion of nikur, we find the words ומשקליה לדכר ונוקבא – which he understood as referring to the removal of the gid from both male and female animals. Other authorities, however, questioned whether this was indeed the meaning of that passage.

The Third Answer: Rav Eybeschutz's Own Hand

A remarkable discovery was reported in the Torah journal HaPardes (vol. 4, issue 1, 1930). Rav Shlomo Michoel Neches, Rav of the Breed Street Shul in Los Angeles, reported that he had examined a copy of the 1763 Altona first edition of the Kreisi u'Pleisi, printed in Rav Yonasan's lifetime, in which Rav Yonasan had apparently corrected the text in his own hand from סמ"ג to סדר הלכות ניקור – סה"נ. [That very copy is now in the UCLA library collection. In 2020, Moshe Haberman presented compelling evidence authenticating Rav Yonasan's handwriting in the volume.]

A work entitled סדר הניקור is indeed printed in some editions of the Tur at the end of Yoreh De'ah 65, where we find the words וחותך הזכרות והנקבות ומשליכו. However, it is not clear that these words refer to male and female animals, rather than to different anatomical structures within the same animal.

Prof. Shnayer Leiman (2004, pp. 26–29) identifies a much more convincing source: a work on הלכות ניקור, printed in Cracow in 1577, containing a section entitled סדר הניקור, with glosses by רבי צבי בוכטנר, who had consulted with the Rema. In discussing the cut of meat containing the gid hanasheh, the work explicitly distinguishes between a cow and a bull, ודוקא בפרה צריך לקלוף ... אבל אנו נוהגין להקליף גם בשור, and then proceeds to describe the removal of the gidim prohibited משום גיד הנשה. Here, there is clear evidence that the prohibition applies to female animals as well as male animals.

Thus, Rav Yonasan's proof was apparently never from the Semag at all. It came from a practical guide for porgers, which dealt with the anatomy of the animals themselves. A single misprinted abbreviation kept the Torah world searching for a proof in the wrong sefer for over a century and a half. In the end, the words of the Chasam Sofer turned out to be true in a way he did not expect: דברי חכמים קיימים.

[See also Prof. Shnayer Leiman, "Rabbi Jonathan Eibeschuetz and the Porger: A Study in Heresy, Haskalah, and Halakhah" (2004), https://tinyurl.com/RLeiman-Porger; Rabbi Yehuda Spitz (Ohr Somayach, "The Gid Hanasheh Incongruity"), https://articles.ohr.edu/articles/the-gid-hanasheh-incongruity; Moshe Haberman, "The Twice Told Tale of R' Yonasan Eybeshutz and the Porger" (The Seforim Blog, 2020), https://seforimblog.com/2020/09/the-twice-told-tale-of-r-yonasan-eybeshutz-and-the-porger/; and Eretz Chemdah, quoting Rashi in Chullin 90a (d"h hane'echalim), who mentions a korban chatas as subject to the issur of gid hanasheh. The ordinary individual's chatas is a female goat or sheep (Vayikra 4:28, 32).]

Women's Obligation in Tefillah:
Part II — Which Parts of Davening Should Women Recite?

Adapted and summarized by **Chaim O. Shulman** from *Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, by **R' Elyakim G. Ellinson**, Chapters 9–10; *Halichos Bas Yisrael*, by **R' Yitzchok Yaakov Fuchs**, Chapter 2; *Peninei Halacha, Women's Prayer*, by **R' Eliezer Melamed**; and *Women and Prayer*, by **R' Doniel Neustadt**.

A Review and Clarification of Part I

In Part I, we examined the basic obligation of women in tefillah. The Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim 106:4) concludes that women should ordinarily recite Shemoneh Esrei at Shacharis and Minchah. The Magen Avraham (106:2), however, seeks to justify the longstanding practice of most women of his time, who did not regularly recite the formal daily prayers. He suggests that women's obligation of tefillah, which the Gemara describes as רחמי נינהו - *a request for Divine mercy* - may be fulfilled through a brief daily supplication, such as a personal request for Hashem's assistance or help with one's needs, since perhaps Chazal did not obligate women to do more.

There is also an intermediate position: women should recite one formal Shemoneh Esrei each day, but need not recite both Shacharis and Minchah. The Bach (Orach Chaim 106) explains, דחובת התפלה עצמה היא דאורייתא אלא דזמני התפלה אינן מן התורה אלא מדרבנן - *the basic obligation of prayer is from the Torah, while the designated times for prayer were instituted by Chazal*. Rav Eliezer Melamed explains that an intermediate position emerges from the approach associated with the Bach and Pri Chadash. According to this understanding, women must pray once daily, but since Chazal established the formal text of Shemoneh Esrei, that one prayer should be recited in the prescribed form (*Peninei Halacha, Women's Prayer*, 2:3). Some women recite their daily Shemoneh Esrei at Shacharis, while others may find Minchah more convenient, particularly when caring for young

children or attending to other family responsibilities makes morning davening difficult. (See the revised Part I at parsha.net.)

These distinctions become important when we turn to the rest of davening. A woman who opens her siddur in the morning encounters Birchos HaTorah, Birchos HaShachar, Korbanos, Pesukei DeZimrah, Krias Shema and its berachos, and finally Shemoneh Esrei. Must she recite all these portions? Are some required independently of Shemoneh Esrei? And if she is exempt from a particular prayer, may she nevertheless recite it together with its accompanying berachos?

Birchos HaTorah: Why Should Women Recite Them?

Women are exempt from the general mitzvah of Talmud Torah imposed upon men. Nevertheless, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 47:14) rules unequivocally, נשים מברכות ברכת התורה - *women recite Birchos HaTorah*. Why should women recite blessings associated with a mitzvah from which they are ordinarily exempt?

The Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 47), citing the Maharil and Agur, explains that although women are not obligated in the general mitzvah of Torah study, they must learn the halachos necessary for their own observance. A woman must know the laws of Shabbos, kashrus, berachos, and the other mitzvos incumbent upon her. The Magen Avraham (47:14) follows this reasoning, writing, דהא חייבות ללמוד דינין שלהם - *for women are obligated to study the laws applicable to them*. He also mentions the recitation of the Korbanos passages as another basis for Birchos HaTorah.

Rav Chaim Soloveitchik offers another explanation. As cited by his son, the Brisker Rav (*Chidushei HaGriz*, Hilchos Berachos 11:16), Birchos HaTorah are not simply blessings over the mitzvah of studying Torah, but relate to the Torah itself. A woman may not have the same personal obligation of Talmud Torah as a man, but the Torah she studies is no less Torah. In Brisker terminology, the blessing concerns the *cheftza shel Torah* - the Torah itself - rather than the personal obligation of *limud haTorah*.

The Gra (Orach Chaim 47:14), however, questions whether women's obligation to know the halachos applicable to them constitutes the mitzvah of Talmud Torah itself. He therefore explains their recitation of Birchos HaTorah through the broader principle permitting women to recite blessings over mitzvos from which they are exempt. According to this approach, the blessings are permitted even if women do not have the same underlying obligation as men (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, pp. 110–111).

Birchos HaShachar: An Independent Requirement

The Gemara (Berachos 60b) describes the blessings recited upon awakening, opening one's eyes, dressing, standing upright, and performing other ordinary activities. These blessings acknowledge the daily benefits through which Hashem sustains human life. The Aruch HaShulchan (Orach Chaim 70:1) writes, ובברכות השחר חייבות מדינא, שגם הן בכללא דברכות שעליהן נתקנו כל ברכות השחר - *women are obligated in Birchos HaShachar because they, too, receive the benefits for which these blessings were instituted*. Although ordinarily recited in the morning, these blessings express gratitude for Hashem's kindness and are not merely an introduction to Shemoneh Esrei. Rav Fuchs similarly cites the Tur (Orach Chaim 46), who explains that Chazal instituted blessings acknowledging the benefits a person receives from Hashem (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §5, n. 12).

Accordingly, women should recite Birchos HaShachar regardless of which opinion they follow concerning the formal daily prayers. Even a woman who fulfills her obligation of tefillah through a brief daily supplication should recite these blessings as part of her regular morning observance.

Korbanos: Should Women Recite the Sacrificial Passages?

The Gemara (Berachos 26b) teaches, תפלות כנגד תמידין תקנום - *the daily prayers were instituted corresponding to the daily offerings*. Since Shacharis corresponds to the morning Tamid, one might assume that women who must recite Shacharis should also recite the passages describing the Korbanos.

The Maharil, cited by the Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim 47), supports this reasoning. Since women are obligated in tefillah, and the daily prayers correspond to the offerings, they should recite the relevant sacrificial passages as well. The Magen Avraham (47:14) likewise states, ועוד דחייבות לומר פרשת הקרבנות כמו שחייבות בתפלה - *women are obligated to recite the passages concerning Korbanos, just as they are obligated in tefillah*.

The Yaavetz, however, questions women's obligation in the sacrificial passages. In *Mor U'Ketziah* (end of Orach Chaim 48), he writes, איני מוצא טעם בזה כי אין שייכות לנשים בקרבנות אלא מה שהוא לחובת עצמן - *he does not understand why women should be required to recite the general sacrificial passages when their responsibilities concerned particular offerings incumbent upon them*, such as those brought by a yoledes or zavah.

The Chida (*Yosef Ometz* §67) likewise questions whether women must recite Korbanos (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §7, nn. 19–20). Thus, although the Magen Avraham follows the authorities requiring their recitation, the matter remains disputed. Rabbi Neustadt notes that many authorities exempt women from Korbanos and that it has not generally been customary for women to recite the entire section (*Women and Prayer: Obligations and Priorities*, n. 23).

Pesukei DeZimrah: Is Preparation for Prayer Also Required?

The Gemara (Berachos 32a) teaches, לעולם יסדר אדם שבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ואחר כך יתפלל - *a person should first arrange the praises of Hashem and then pray*. Pesukei DeZimrah was instituted to prepare a person for Shemoneh Esrei by reciting praise before presenting one's requests.

The Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chaim 70:2), following Rav Akiva Eiger, explains, פסוקי דזמרא נתקנו בשביל התפילה, ממילא נשים חייבות - *Pesukei DeZimrah was instituted for the sake of prayer; consequently, women are obligated in it*. The reasoning is that since women must recite Shemoneh Esrei, they should also recite the praises instituted as preparation for it. This reasoning applies particularly to women who must recite the formal Shemoneh Esrei, rather than those relying on the more lenient position that a brief daily supplication suffices.

The Aruch HaShulchan (70:1), however, maintains that women need not recite Baruch She'amar and Yishtabach, although they may certainly do so. He asks, ולמה לא יוכלו לומר כמו שעשתה מרים וכל נשי ישראל בקריעת ים סוף - *why should women not offer praise just as Miriam and the women of Israel did at the splitting of the sea?* (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, pp. 109–110).

Rav Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg observes that the Mishnah Berurah presents the opinion requiring Pesukei DeZimrah in the main text, while mentioning the more lenient position of the Shulchan Aruch HaRav only in the Shaar HaTziyun. He therefore questions whether women should rely upon a complete exemption and suggests that where they cannot recite the entire section, they may at least recite

Baruch She'amar, Ashrei, and Yishtabach (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §7, n. 21).

Rav Melamed takes a more lenient practical approach, maintaining that women need not recite Pesukei DeZimrah, although those wishing to enhance their davening may recite its principal portions (*Peninei Halacha, Women's Prayer*, 8:3). Rabbi Neustadt similarly treats the question as disputed and places Pesukei DeZimrah below Shemoneh Esrei and several other prayers in the order of priority for a woman whose time is limited.

A separate question concerns the accompanying berachos of Baruch She'amar and Yishtabach. Ashkenazic practice generally permits women to recite these blessings, even where they are not required to recite Pesukei DeZimrah. Some Sephardic authorities, particularly Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer*, II, Orach Chaim §6), rule that women should omit Shem U'Malchus when reciting them voluntarily.

Krias Shema: Exempt, but Encouraged to Recite It

The Mishnah (Berachos 20a) explicitly exempts women from Krias Shema because it is a time-bound positive commandment. Nevertheless, the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 70:1) writes, ונכון הוא ללמדם שיקבלו עליהן עול מלכות שמים - *it is proper to teach women to accept upon themselves the yoke of Heaven*. The Rema adds, ויקראו לפחות פסוק ראשון - *they should recite at least the first verse of Shema*. The Bach maintains that women are obligated in the first verse of Shema, whereas the Gra understands its recitation as a recommended practice rather than a formal requirement. The Gra points to the Shulchan Aruch's language as indicating a stringency, לחומרא בעלמא, rather than an independent obligation. Nevertheless, the first verse expresses the fundamental acceptance of Hashem's sovereignty, and its daily recitation is therefore especially appropriate for women (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, pp. 104–105; *Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §8, n. 23).

Women may also recite all three paragraphs of Shema, and many women who daven the full Shacharis service customarily do so. Since they are exempt from the formal time-bound mitzvah, however, the deadline for fulfilling Krias Shema does not apply to them in the same manner as it applies to men.

Birchos Krias Shema: May Women Recite the Berachos?

Since women are exempt from the mitzvah of Krias Shema, are they also exempt from its accompanying berachos? And even if they are exempt, may they nevertheless recite those blessings with Shem U'Malchus?

The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 70:1) expressly exempts women from Birchos Krias Shema, writing, נ"ל דנשים פטורות ג"כ מברכת ק"ש דיש להם ג"כ זמן קבוע - *it appears to me that women are also exempt from Birchos Krias Shema because these blessings have fixed times*. Nevertheless, Ashkenazic practice generally follows Rabbeinu Tam's position permitting women to recite blessings over time-bound mitzvos from which they are exempt, as reflected in the Rema (Orach Chaim 17:2 and 589:6). Accordingly, the Mishnah Berurah (70:2) permits women to recite Birchos Krias Shema even where they are not required to recite them.

Some Sephardic authorities take a more restrictive position. Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer*, II, Orach Chaim §6) rules that women should not recite these blessings with Shem U'Malchus. Other authorities distinguish Birchos Krias Shema from ordinary mitzvah blessings because they are principally blessings of praise and thanksgiving, rather than blessings containing אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו. Rav Fuchs discusses these differing opinions in *Halichos Bas Yisrael* (ch. 2, §8, n. 26).

Emes Veyatziv: Remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim

The blessing of Emes Veyatziv raises an additional question because it includes the remembrance of Yetzias Mitzrayim. Although women are exempt from Krias Shema, are they independently required to remember the Exodus?

The Magen Avraham (Orach Chaim 70:1) maintains that women are obligated in Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim because the mitzvah applies both by day and by night. He therefore does not regard it as an ordinary time-bound positive commandment from which women are exempt and writes, אך נ"ל דמ"מ מחוייבים לומר אמת ויציב דזכירות י"מ הוא דאורייתא - *nevertheless, it appears to me that women must recite Emes Veyatziv because remembering Yetzias Mitzrayim is a Torah obligation*.

The Shaagas Aryeh (§13), however, disagrees. He maintains that the daytime and nighttime obligations to remember the Exodus are separate time-bound requirements. The fact that the Exodus must be remembered both by day and by night does not mean that the mitzvah is independent of time. Since each remembrance must occur during its designated period, he considers the mitzvah time-bound and exempts women under the general rule (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, pp. 105–106).

The Magen Avraham further maintains that women who must remember the Exodus and recite tefillah should also observe סמיכת גאולה לתפילה - *joining the blessing concerning redemption directly to Shemoneh Esrei*. He writes, ואם כן צריכות לסמוך גאולה לתפילה (Orach Chaim 70:1). The Mishnah Berurah (70:2) follows this reasoning. (However, for a woman relying upon the position that a brief daily supplication suffices in place of the formal Shemoneh Esrei, it is unclear how the requirement of semichas geulah l'tefillah would apply.)

If a Woman Has Limited Time, What Should She Say First?

These distinctions become particularly important when a woman has only a short time available for davening. Should she begin with Birchos HaShachar and continue through the siddur, even if she may not reach Shemoneh Esrei? Or should she give priority to Shemoneh Esrei and omit portions whose requirement is less clearly established?

Rav Y. A. Silber, in *Birur Halachah* (Orach Chaim 70), recommends that a woman with very limited time give priority to Shemoneh Esrei, followed by the first verse of Shema, Emes Veyatziv, and portions of Pesukei DeZimrah (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §2, n. 7). Rabbi Doniel Neustadt likewise gives priority to Shemoneh Esrei, followed by Shema, Birchos HaShachar and Birchos HaTorah, Emes Veyatziv, and Pesukei DeZimrah (*Women and Prayer: Obligations and Priorities*, Parshas Vaera 5772). Rav Melamed recommends that a woman recite Birchos HaShachar, Birchos HaTorah, the opening verses of Shema, and Shemoneh Esrei, adding Pesukei DeZimrah when she has more time (*Peninei Halacha, Women's Prayer*, 8:3).

Mistakes in Shemoneh Esrei: Must a Woman Repeat the Prayer?

Suppose a woman recites Shemoneh Esrei but makes an error ordinarily requiring the prayer to be repeated. For example, she omits Yaaleh Veyavo on Rosh Chodesh (Shacharis or Mincha) or fails to recite Vesein Tal U'Matar during the winter. Must she repeat Shemoneh Esrei?

For a woman following the Mishnah Berurah's ruling that she must recite Shacharis and Minchah, the ordinary rules governing mistakes in Shemoneh Esrei apply. The more difficult question concerns a woman relying upon the more lenient position, who is not ordinarily required to recite the formal Amidah but nevertheless chooses to do so.

Rav Ovadia Yosef (*Yabia Omer,* VI, Orach Chaim §§17–18) rules that once a woman undertakes the established Shemoneh Esrei, she must recite it properly. If she omits something requiring repetition, she must repeat the prayer, even though she may not have been required to recite that particular Amidah in the first place. The Magen Gibborim (Orach Chaim 106:3) likewise requires repetition, while *Milei D'Avos* (V, Orach Chaim §17) takes a more lenient position (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §19, nn. 47–49).

Musaf: A Different Kind of Prayer

The ordinary obligation of Shacharis and Minchah continues on Shabbos and Yom Tov, even though Shemoneh Esrei then contains praise and sanctification of the day rather than the weekday requests for personal needs. Musaf, however, presents a different question. Musaf corresponds to the additional communal offerings brought in the Beis HaMikdash on Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, and Yom Tov. The Tzelach (Berachos 26a) therefore maintains that women are exempt from Musaf because it is time-bound and does not have the same character of בקשת רחמים - *requesting Divine mercy* - as the ordinary daily prayers.

Rav Akiva Eiger (Responsum §9) offers another reason for exemption. The communal offerings were financed through the half-shekel contributions, in which women were not obligated. Since Musaf corresponds to these offerings, he questions whether women are included in the corresponding requirement of prayer.

Other authorities disagree. The Magen Gibborim and additional poskim maintain that women should recite Musaf. The Shoel U'Meishiv connects Musaf with the sanctity of Shabbos and Yom Tov, arguing that since women are obligated in Kiddush, they may also be required to recite the prayer expressing the sanctity of the day (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, pp. 113–115).

Thus, whether women must recite Musaf remains disputed. Rav Melamed concludes that women are not required to recite Musaf, although those who do so receive credit for it (*Peninei Halacha, Women's Prayer*, 22:6). Rav Fuchs likewise records the widespread practice of women reciting Musaf (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §21).

Hallel: Festivals, Chanukah, and Rosh Chodesh

The Gemara (Sukkah 38a) indicates that women are generally exempt from Hallel because it is a time-bound positive commandment. Rashi explains that a woman cannot discharge a man's obligation in Hallel because she is not herself obligated.

The Hallel recited on the Seder night is different. Women are obligated in the four cups through the principle אף הן היו באותו הנס - *women, too, were included in the miracle*. Tosafos (Sukkah 38a, s.v. Mi) explain that the four cups were instituted in connection with the Haggadah and Hallel. Accordingly, women must recite the Hallel that forms part of the Seder.

Chanukah Hallel raises a separate question. Women are obligated in lighting Chanukah candles because אף הן היו באותו הנס, but does that principle also require them to recite Hallel? Some authorities maintain that it does, while others distinguish Hallel from the particular mitzvos of Chanukah. The question therefore remains disputed (*Bein HaIsha L'Yotzra*, ch. 10).

Rosh Chodesh Hallel differs again, since its recitation is a minhag even for men. The question concerning women is therefore whether they may participate in the established custom and recite its berachos. The Biur Halachah (Orach Chaim 422, s.v. Hallel) permits Ashkenazic women to recite Hallel with its blessings, including on Rosh Chodesh, consistent with Ashkenazic practice concerning voluntary time-bound mitzvos.

The Significance of an Established Practice

A final consideration concerns a woman who regularly recites the full morning service, even where she is not required to do so according to the opinion she follows. Does that practice become binding upon her?

The Pri Megadim discusses whether a regular practice of reciting daily prayers may acquire the status of an undertaking comparable to a neder, although other authorities question whether every established practice becomes binding in this manner (*Halichos Bas Yisrael*, ch. 2, §2, n. 2). The question becomes particularly relevant when a woman who previously had sufficient time to daven regularly finds that caring for young children or other responsibilities no longer permits her to continue that practice.

Conclusion

Women's obligations in davening cannot be determined merely by asking whether they must recite Shemoneh Esrei. Some portions of the morning service have an independent halachic basis, while others were instituted as preparation for prayer or are associated with time-bound mitzvos from which women are generally exempt. The central distinction throughout is between what women must recite, what they should recite, and what they may recite voluntarily. Moreover, the answer may depend upon which position concerning women's basic obligation in tefillah one follows. Even where a prayer may be recited voluntarily, the right to recite its accompanying berachos may require separate consideration.

Adapted from **עיוני פרשה by Rav Avraham Rivlin**

Why Was Yaakov Punished for Concealing Dinah? The Responsibility and Limits of Kiruv Rechokim

Chazal and the mefarshim examine the events leading up to מעשה דינה to understand why Yaakov was held accountable for his conduct and what lessons the episode holds for later generations.

The night before his encounter with Esav, Yaakov brought his family across the Yabok: ויקח את שתי נשיו ואת שתי שפחתיו ואת אחד עשר ילדיו ויעבר את מעבר יבק (Vayishlach 32:23) - he took his two wives, his two maidservants and his eleven children, and crossed the Yabok. Rashi asks: ודינה היכן היתה - where was Dinah?

How did Chazal know that Dinah was the one missing? The pasuk says ילדיו - his children, not בניו - his sons, so perhaps Dinah was counted and one of the shevatim was missing. Rav Chaim Volozhin answers in the name of the Gra. According to the Midrash, Binyamin merited having the Beis HaMikdash in his portion because he alone of the shevatim did not bow to Esav, since he had not yet been born. Had another of the shevatim been absent, Binyamin would not have been unique. It must have been Dinah.

Rashi explains: נתנה בתיבה ונעל בפניה שלא יתן בה עשו עיניו - he put her in a box and locked it, so that Esav would not set his eyes on her. He adds: ולכך נענש יעקב שמנעה מאחיו שמא תחזירנו למוטב ונפלה ביד שכם -

Yaakov was punished for withholding her from his brother, for perhaps she would have brought him back to the right path, and she fell into the hands of Shechem.

The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 76:9) reads the pasuk למס מרעהו חסד (Iyov 6:14) - one who withholds kindness from his friend as Hashem's rebuke to Yaakov: מנעת חסדך מן אחוך - you withheld kindness from your brother. The punishment was middah keneged middah: לא בקשת להשיאה למהול הרי היא נשאת לערל לא בקשת להשיאה דרך היתר הרי נשאת דרך איסור - you would not marry her to one who was circumcised, so she was taken by one who was not; you would not marry her in a permitted way, so she was taken in a forbidden way. The Eitz Yosef explains that had Dinah married Esav, she might have brought him to teshuvah.

But what was Yaakov's sin? Must a father marry his daughter to a rasha in the hope that she will reform him? Moreover, the Torah says ועיני לאה רכות (Vayetzei 29:17) - Leah's eyes were tender, and the Gemara (Bava Basra 123a) comments: לא גנאי הוא אלא שבח הוא - it is not a criticism but praise, because she wept constantly at the prospect of marrying Esav. Why was Leah praised for avoiding the very marriage that Yaakov was punished for preventing?

The Consequences of Turning Someone Away

These questions require an appreciation of how seriously Chazal took kiruv rechokim. Many regard drawing others close to Torah as admirable but not as their own responsibility. Chazal saw it differently.

The Torah says: ותמנע היתה פילגש לאליפז בן עשו ותלד לאליפז את עמלק (Vayishlach 36:12) - Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz son of Esav, and she bore him Amalek. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 99b) relates that Timna, a woman of royal lineage, wanted to convert: באתה אצל אברהם יצחק ויעקב ולא קבלוה - she came to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and they did not accept her. She became Eliphaz's concubine instead, saying: מוטב תהא שפחה לאומה זו ולא תהא גבירה לאומה אחרת - better a maidservant to this nation than a noblewoman of another. From her came Amalek, who caused Klal Yisrael untold suffering. Why? דלא איבעי להו לרחקה - because they should not have turned her away.

No one can foresee the consequences of drawing a person close, or of pushing him away. Hence Chazal teach: לעולם תהא שמאל דוחה וימין מקרבת (Sanhedrin 107b) - the left hand should push away while the right hand draws close. Even when someone must be pushed away, the stronger hand should be the one drawing him near.

Why Was Dinah Different from Leah?

The Yalkut Me'am Loez gives three answers.

First, Leah was the daughter of Lavan Harasha and had reason to fear that Esav would influence her rather than the reverse. Dinah was the daughter of Yaakov and granddaughter of Yitzchak, and with that heritage there was nothing to fear: שבודאי היה חוזר לדת - Esav would certainly have returned.

Second, the Me'am Loez points to ערבות - mutual responsibility: כי במעמד הר סיני ערבנו זה לזה אבל הנשים אינן בכלל ערבות - at Har Sinai we became responsible for one another, but women are not included. Yaakov was obligated to try to bring Esav to teshuvah. Leah was not. Beyond this, Yaakov was Esav's brother and was bound by ומבשרך לא תתעלם (Yeshayahu 58:7) - do not ignore your own flesh. In tzedakah the Rambam rules עני שהוא קרובו קודם לכל אדם (Hilchos Matnos Aniyim 7:13) - a poor relative comes before anyone else, and this applies to a relative's spiritual welfare as well. A brother comes before a more distant relative. Yaakov, as the tzaddik of the generation, bore a greater responsibility than anyone. Since הקב"ה מדקדק עם סביביו כחוט השערה (Yevamos 121b) - Hashem is exacting with those close to Him to a hair's breadth, Yaakov was punished severely. An ordinary person, however, is certainly not obligated לכפות את בתו לפני הארי - to bind his daughter and place her before a lion (cf. Pesachim 49b).

Third, the Me'am Loez accepts Yaakov's concern but faults his response. Instead of hiding Dinah in a box, he could have davened, as Leah did, that Esav would not want her. Had Esav seen Dinah's beauty, he might have done teshuvah in the hope that Yaakov would agree to the match. There is a precedent for this in the Gemara (Bava Metzia 84a). Reish Lakish was struck by Rabbi Yochanan's beauty, and Rabbi Yochanan told him: אי הדרת בך יהיבנא לך אחותי דשפירא מינאי - if you return, I will give you my sister, who is more beautiful than I. Reish Lakish accepted and became one of the greatest Amoraim.

Was It Yaakov's Conduct or His Attitude?

A sharper explanation is cited in the name of Rav Ovadiah MiBartenura: שיעקב היה ירא שמא תחזירנו למוטב ולא היה חפץ בזה - Yaakov feared that she might bring Esav back to the right path, and he did not want that.

The baalei mussar said something similar. The Alter of Slabodka (Or HaTzafun, cited in Yalkut Lekach Tov) asks: לשים בתיבה ניחא אבל לאטום אותה ולחזקה במסמרים - placing her in a box is understandable, but sealing it and reinforcing it with nails? On Yaakov's level, the very extent of his precautions revealed a flaw in his attitude toward his brother. The fault lay not in protecting his daughter but in how he regarded the possibility of Esav's teshuvah.

The Chazon Ish and Rav Elchanan Wasserman

Or Elchanan (vol. II, pp. 102-108) contains an exchange of letters between Rav Elchanan Wasserman and the Chazon Ish on whether observant Jews may associate with those who have abandoned Torah observance.

Rav Elchanan held that the prohibition is הלכה מוסכמת באין שום חולק עליה - an accepted halachah that no one disputes. He cited אשרי האיש אשר לא הלך בעצת רשעים ובדרך חטאים לא עמד (Tehillim 1:1) - fortunate is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked nor stood in the path of sinners, and Chazal's warning אם הלכת סופך לעמוד (Avodah Zarah 18b) - if you walked, you will end up standing.

The Chazon Ish replied with the episode of Dinah: ואמנם התחברות לרשעים צריכה שיקול הדעת אם היא מפסדת או מרווחת שהרי נענש יעקב אבינו ע"ה על שמנע דינה מעשו - association with reshaim requires judgment as to whether it brings loss or gain, for Yaakov Avinu was punished for withholding Dinah from Esav. He then answered Rav Elchanan in the language of his own pasuk: ורב גבור העומד בקשרי מלחמה מצוה עליו להלוך ולעמוד - a great warrior in the thick of battle is commanded to walk and to stand. The very acts the pasuk warns against, walking and standing, become a mitzvah for one who goes out to fight sin: ואין זה בכלל הלוך ועמידה בדרך חטאים אלא עושה דין בחטאים - this is not walking or standing in the path of sinners, but executing judgment upon sin. He added a caution: ואמנם שיקול הדעת צריכה סייעתא דשמיא שלא יכשל חס וחלילה - such judgment requires siyata diShmaya, lest one stumble.

In his rejoinder, Rav Elchanan offered an explanation that would set the episode of Dinah apart from the broader question. The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuvah 6:3) teaches that some reshaim sin so gravely that they are denied the opportunity to do teshuvah. Yaakov may have thought Esav was one of them, when in fact he was not, so Yaakov's

error lay in his assessment of Esav. This also explains the Bartenura's difficult statement that Yaakov did not want Esav's teshuvah.
The exchange brings out the delicate balance between the responsibility to draw others close and the duty to guard one's own spiritual welfare. Association aimed at influencing others is fundamentally different from association that exposes one to their influence. But telling the two apart requires real shikul hadaas and siyata diShmaya.

והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה: The Secret of Jewish Survival in Galus
Adapted by CS based on
(i) ***Dorash David****,* ***Rav Dovid Hofstedter*** *on Parshas Vayishlach, המחנה הנשאר לפליטה, pp. 225–228, and*
(ii) ***Rav Yitzchak Kolodetzky,*** *La'asos Retzoncha, Parshas Vayishlach* @ https://www.dirshu.co.il/491528/
When Yaakov learns that Esav is approaching with four hundred men, he divides his camp into two: ויחץ את העם אשר אתו ואת הצאן ואת הבקר והגמלים לשני מחנות. ויאמר אם יבוא עשו אל המחנה האחת והכהו והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה (Vayishlach 32:8–9). Yaakov hopes that even if Esav attacks one camp, the other will escape.
Immediately thereafter, however, in his tefillah to Hashem, Yaakov expresses his gratitude for having become two camps: קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות (32:11). But until now, Yaakov's entire family had been together in one camp. It was only because of the impending danger from Esav that Yaakov found it necessary to divide them. Why does Yaakov express gratitude for the very division necessitated by his predicament?
The Dispersion of Klal Yisrael – A Guarantee of Its Survival
The Ramban, at the beginning of Parshas Vayishlach (32:4), explains that the encounter between Yaakov and Esav foreshadows the relationship between their descendants throughout history: ויש בה עוד רמז לדורות כי כל אשר אירע לאבינו עם עשו אחיו יארע לנו תמיד עם בני עשו. Indeed, Chazal understand Yaakov's tefillah, הצילני נא מיד אחי מיד עשו (32:12), as a prayer not merely for his own salvation but for that of future generations (Bereishis Rabbah 76:5).
In explaining Yaakov's division into two camps, the Ramban (32:9) writes: וגם זה ירמוז שלא יגזרו עלינו בני עשו למחות את שמנו, אבל יעשו רעות עם קצתנו בקצת הארצות שלהם, מלך אחד מהם גוזר בארצו על ממוננו או על גופנו, ומלך אחר מרחם במקומו ומציל הפליטים - The descendants of Esav will never succeed in eradicating our name. They will persecute some of us in certain countries, while another ruler will have compassion and provide refuge for the survivors.
This is also the meaning of the Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 76:3): אם יבוא עשו אל המחנה האחת והכהו, אלו אחינו שבדרום, והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה, אלו אחינו שבגלות. Throughout our long history in galus, when one country expelled its Jews, another afforded them refuge; when one center of Torah was destroyed, another preserved the mesorah and eventually rebuilt what had been lost. What appears to be one of the great tragedies of galus - the dispersion of Klal Yisrael among the nations - is itself one of the means by which Hashem ensures our continued existence.
During the pogroms in Russia, an askan proposed gathering the sifrei Torah from abandoned village shuls into one central shul in a large city, where he hoped they would be better protected. The Ohr Sameach, Rav Meir Simcha of Dvinsk, advised him to leave them in their respective locations. Subsequently, that very shul was struck by shelling. When the askan asked whether his advice had been based upon ruach hakodesh, the Ohr Sameach responded: לא ולא! זו הלכה פסוקה הנלמדת מהנהגתו של יעקב אבינו - Not at all! This is an established principle derived from the conduct of Yaakov Avinu (La'asos Retzoncha, Parshas Vayishlach).
Similarly, during World War I, when the advancing armies threatened Radin, the Chofetz Chaim was confronted with the question of whether to relocate his yeshiva. There is a well-known account of how the גורל הגר"א pointed to Yaakov's division of his camp into two. The yeshiva was accordingly divided, with one group remaining in Radin and the other relocating to Kremenchug. Those who remained in Radin subsequently formed the nucleus of the rebuilt yeshiva after the war (ibid.).
The Rebuilding of Torah in Eretz Yisrael and America
A remarkable application of this principle is recorded in Chofetz Chaim Al HaTorah (32:9). In 1933, shortly after Hitler's rise to power and in the final year of the Chofetz Chaim's life, the Ponevezher Rav, Rav Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman, expressed to the Chofetz Chaim his grave concern over the fate of European Jewry. The Chofetz Chaim responded that the enemies of Klal Yisrael would never succeed in destroying the entire Jewish people, for the Torah promises, והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה. When the Ponevezher Rav asked where that surviving camp would be, the Chofetz Chaim responded with the words of the Navi Ovadiah, in the haftarah of Parshas Vayishlach: ובהר ציון תהיה פליטה והיה קדש - On Mount Zion there will be survivors, and it will be holy (Ovadiah 1:17). These very words were subsequently inscribed on the Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak.
The fulfillment of the Chofetz Chaim's words was by no means apparent even during World War II, when the advance of Rommel's army into Egypt in 1942 posed a grave threat to the Jewish community in Eretz Yisrael.
In the aftermath of the Holocaust, both Eretz Yisrael and America emerged as extraordinary centers for the rebuilding of the Torah world that had been devastated in Europe. While the Ponevezher Rav devoted himself to rebuilding Torah in Eretz Yisrael, Rav Aharon Kotler undertook a parallel mission in America. As Rav Yitzchak Kolodetzky observes (La'asos Retzoncha, Parshas Vayishlach), גם באמריקה התקיים והיה המחנה הנשאר לפליטה, ובזכות כמה אנשים גדולים התקיים גם הפסוק והיה קדש - In America, too, the promise of the surviving camp was fulfilled, and through the efforts of several Gedolim, the promise that it would be holy was likewise fulfilled.
There is a well-known story that when Rav Aharon Kotler was escaping war-torn Europe and deliberating whether to proceed to Eretz Yisrael or join Rav Moshe Feinstein in America, the גורל הגר"א yielded the pasuk, ויאמר ה' אל אהרן לך לקראת משה המדברה (Shemos 4:27). What was then regarded as the spiritual midbar of America would become a flourishing center of Torah. (I also heard this story related by Yehuda Geberer on his Jewish History Soundbites podcast, [The Life of Rav Aharon Kotler, Part II: Rebuilding Anew](https://jsoundbites.podbean.com/e/the-life-of-rav-aharon-kotler-part-ii-rebuilding-anew/).)
The Responsibility of the Surviving Camp
There is, however, an additional dimension to the Midrash. Immediately after identifying the two camps with different Jewish communities, the Midrash continues: אמר רבי הושעיה, אף על פי שנשארו לפליטה, מתענים הם עלינו בשני ובחמישי - Although they have survived,

they fast on our behalf on Mondays and Thursdays. The Yedei Moshe (ad loc.) explains that they davened for the redemption of their brethren in galus, even though they understood that they themselves might subsequently find themselves in galus in their place.

The purpose of the two camps is thus not merely to ensure the survival of Klal Yisrael, but to enable those who have been spared to sustain those who are suffering. Moreover, the identity of the two camps constantly changes. Those who enjoy peace and prosperity in one generation may themselves require assistance in the next. Throughout galus, the two camps alternate in their respective roles, assisting one another through their tefillos, financial support and efforts to provide refuge. The Torah communities of Eretz Yisrael and America are a particularly striking illustration of this principle.

We can now understand why Yaakov expresses such profound gratitude to Hashem: כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות. Hashem had blessed him not only with a large family and considerable wealth, but had also bestowed upon his descendants the secret of their continued existence throughout galus. The very division necessitated by Yaakov's predicament was itself a manifestation of Hashem's chesed.

To be among the מחנה הנשאר לפליטה is not merely a privilege and a blessing; it is also an obligation to sustain and rebuild the other camp.

Vayishlach – קטנתי מכל החסדים: The Spiritual Cost of a Miracle and the Meaning of Birchas Hagomel

Adapted from

Yalkut Lekach Tov *who quotes Yeshuos Yaakov and the introduction to Shalmei Nedarim*

Before his encounter with Esav, Yaakov davens: קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך (Vayishlach 32:11) - *I have become small from all the kindnesses and all the truth You have done for Your servant.* Rashi explains: נתמעטו זכיותי על ידי החסדים והאמת שעשית עמי - *my merits have been diminished by the kindness and truth You have shown me.* Although Hashem had promised to protect him, Yaakov feared he no longer had the *zechuyos* to deserve that protection.

From this pasuk Chazal (Shabbos 32a) learn that a person should never put himself in danger and rely on a miracle, שמא אין עושין לו נס ואם עושין לו נס מנכין לו מזכיותיו - *perhaps no miracle will be done for him, and if one is, it is deducted from his merits.*

A Sign of Greatness or of Deficiency?

The Gemara (Shabbos 53b) tells of a man whose wife died and left him with a nursing infant. He could not afford a wet nurse, and a miracle occurred that allowed him to nurse the child himself. Rav Yosef exclaimed: בא וראה כמה גדול אדם זה שנעשה לו נס כזה - *see how great this man is, that such a miracle was done for him.* Abaye replied: אדרבה כמה גרוע אדם זה שנשתנו לו סדרי בראשית - *on the contrary, how lowly this man is, that the order of creation had to be changed for him.*

The Tosafos Yeshanim ask a question. The Midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 30:8) says the same miracle happened to Mordechai when he raised Esther: ויהי אומן את הדסה (Esther 2:7) - *he raised Hadassah.* Would Abaye call Mordechai Hatzaddik a גרוע אדם?

The Yeshuos Yaakov answers that Rav Yosef and Abaye do not disagree at all. Abaye agrees that such a miracle reflects great *zechuyos*. When he says כמה גרוע, he is describing what the miracle cost the man, not the man's stature before it. As the Shalmei Nedarim notes, this is why Abaye says גרוע rather than גרוע: פחות means a subtraction (גרעון), not an inherent inferiority. Rav Yosef speaks of the greatness that earned the miracle, and Abaye speaks of the price paid for it. This also answers the question about Mordechai, for ומי לנו גדול מיעקב אבינו שאמר קטנתי מכל החסדים - *who is greater than Yaakov Avinu, yet even he said Katonti.*

מי שגמלך כל טוב

On this basis, the Shalmei Nedarim explains an unusual feature of Birchas Hagomel. When someone recites הגומל לחייבים טובות שגמלני כל טוב, the listeners do not simply answer Amen. They add a *tefillah* for him: מי שגמלך כל טוב הוא יגמלך כל טוב סלה - *He Who granted you all good, may He grant you all good forever* (Berachos 54b; Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 219:2).

Why add this *tefillah*? The *chesed* he received may have come at the expense of his *zechuyos*. The listeners ask that it not reduce the good still awaiting him, so that his *yeshuah* will be pure *chesed*, בלי נכיון - *with no deduction.*

The Shalmei Nedarim reads ומכל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו in Birchas Hamazon the same way. Along with thanking Hashem for His goodness in this world, it is a *tefillah* that none of that goodness should take away from the good that awaits us לעולם - *in the eternal world.*

He adds that one who merits a great *yeshuah* should take on new *zechuyos*. When Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai came out of the cave where he and his son had been miraculously kept alive, he declared: הואיל ואיתרחיש ניסא איזיל אתקין מילתא (Shabbos 33b) - *since a miracle was done for me, I will go and improve something.*

The right response to Hashem's *chasadim* is gratitude for the past and a renewed commitment to *avodas Hashem* for the future.

Adapted from

Rabbi YY Jacobson - Why the Obsession with Israel?

"Katonti": Are We the Chosen People?

Why the Obsession with Israel?

I see no rational way to explain the obsessive hatred of Israel and the Jews without the belief that Jews are G-d's chosen people, charged with making the world a place of goodness and kindness.

Jews make up less than a quarter of one percent of humanity, yet the obsession with them has gone on for nearly 4,000 years. It makes no sense. Some 500,000 people were killed in Syria, including tens of thousands of children, and there were hardly any demonstrations. Israel went to war to protect its children from slaughter, against an enemy that wants its own children to die so that Israel can be demonized, and it is the Jews who are condemned. Gaza was called a Jewish "concentration camp," though Israel removed every last Jew from Gaza in 2005. Had Gaza not voted in Hamas in 2006 and poured its resources into murdering Jews, it could have been the Singapore of the Middle East.

None of this makes sense unless we appreciate that we are G-d's people, chosen to be a light to the nations. That is why we trigger the world in unimaginable ways.

Yet Jews find this hard to accept, even though the world knows it. Nearly every nation has seen itself as chosen or divinely special. China means "Middle Kingdom," Japan is the "Land of the Rising Sun," the British thought they were chosen, and Christians and

Muslims certainly do. They are happy to hear it. Tell a Jew he is chosen, and he says: "Me? I'm just a human being."

Jewish chosenness cannot be racist, because Jews are not a race. There are Jews of every race, and anyone can join the Jewish people and become as chosen as Avraham, Moshe or the Rambam. Can reason alone explain how a band of ex-slaves gave the world a moral Creator, ethical monotheism, the Bible, a purposeful view of history and the prophets, without G-d playing the decisive role?

Still, we are uncomfortable. To suggest that Jews are closer to G-d than other nations smacks of arrogance and elitism. That is because we do not understand what "chosen" means.

The Alter Rebbe's Letter

In 1798, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), founder of Chabad, was arrested for treason on the basis of petitions to the Czar by opponents of Chassidism. He could have been executed, which would have devastated not only Chabad but much of the Chassidic movement, whose chief defender he was. After 53 days he was exonerated and freed. His release on 19 Kislev is celebrated to this day as the decisive victory of Chassidism.

Upon his release he sent his followers a short, extraordinary letter (Tanya, Igeres Hakodesh 2). After years of persecution, an arrest and a terrifying trial, he warned them against any display of haughtiness over their victory, and against belittling or mocking those who had sought their downfall.

The letter opens with Yaakov's words from Parshas Vayishlach, which was read the Shabbos before the release: קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך (Vayishlach 32:11) - *I have become small from all the kindnesses and all the truth You have done for Your servant.* Why should kindness humble a person? Shouldn't it make him proud? If G-d gave me all this, I must deserve it!

The Alter Rebbe answers: בכל חסד וחסד שהקדוש ברוך הוא עושה לאדם צריך להיות שפל רוח במאד - *with every kindness Hashem does for a person, he must become exceedingly humble.* A kindness is G-d drawing a person closer, and כל הקרוב אל ה' ביתר שאת והגבה למעלה מעלה צריך להיות יותר שפל רוח למטה מטה - *the closer one is to Hashem, the lower in spirit he must be*, because before Him everything is as nothing. This was the middah of Avraham, who said אנכי עפר ואפר - *I am dust and ashes*, and of Yaakov. Its opposite is the kindness of Yishmael: the greater the kindness, the more his arrogance grows.

Who Chose You?

Chosenness leads not to arrogance but to humility. Had a human king chosen us, we would become elitists, since closeness to a mortal ruler inflates the ego. But we were chosen by G-d, and the closer one comes to G-d, the more one senses one's own insignificance. Before infinity, all delusions of self-importance fall away. Closeness to G-d demands introspection, not smugness.

G-d is the core of all reality. "Hashem Echad" does not only mean that there is one G-d rather than twenty. It means that G-d is oneness itself, the unity that pervades all existence. We are all diverse expressions of one reality.

To be conscious of G-d is to refuse to let the ego take over. ("Ego" stands for Easing G-d Out.) When I do not recognize my true value as a reflection of G-d, I need my ego to feel good about myself and to put you down. When I am G-d conscious, I no longer need to protect my ego. I become both smaller and greater. I am nothing, because there is nothing but G-d's infinite oneness. And I am great, because my life becomes a seamless expression of that oneness.

Closeness to G-d therefore makes us respect others more, not less, because G-d's light pervades every person and every creature. One who becomes bigoted or arrogant in the name of chosenness has missed the point. Your success never equals my failure. I reflect one aspect of G-d, and you reflect another.

That is the Chosen People: a nation given the opportunity to sense G-d's closeness, hear His truth and bring His message to the world. Jewish chosenness is not a gene but a state of the soul. Anyone can join, as long as he is ready to have his bubble burst and experience himself as nothing. And that is why so many loathe the Jewish people. We were chosen to teach every person that he too has been chosen, to serve G-d and be an ambassador of love, light and goodness in His world.

What Did Chosenness Do to Us?

Has our belief in chosenness made us a people that persecutes and annihilates others, or has it made us feel responsible to give, contribute and help? Has it made us complacent, or the most self-critical nation on earth? (Often Israel's worst critics are Jews!)

The true test of chosenness is humility, and most Jews today pass it with flying colors. Their humility is so deep that they cannot accept that they are chosen. Other groups are comfortable claiming they are the best. Jews will do anything to insist they are nothing special. Now that's a Chosen People!

Katonti!

This, explained the Alter Rebbe, was the hallmark of Yaakov. To the self-absorbed person, a kindness from G-d proves his own worth. To the spiritually mature person, it is an act of Divine love, G-d drawing him closer, and the closer one comes, the smaller one feels before the Infinite. When blessed with a gift, the Jew's first instinct is: Katonti! I am humbled.

This was the response the Alter Rebbe asked of his followers: to become more humble and more authentic, and to be channels for Divine oneness. Chosenness, properly understood, produces a confidence rooted not in ego but in humility. It is the confidence of ambassadors for goodness.