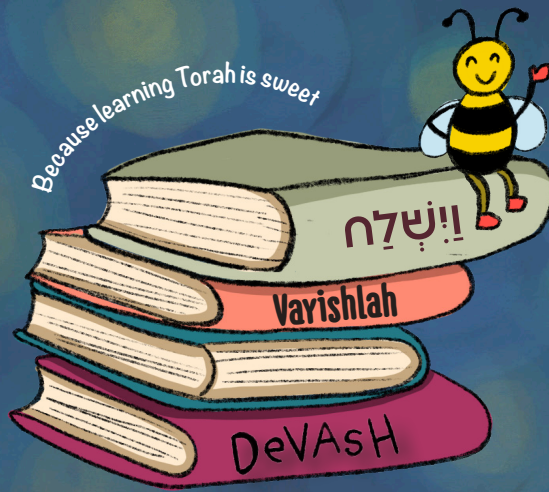


• BEREISHIT  
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• HAYYEI SARAH  
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י"ג - י"ט בכסלו תשפ"ד November 26 - December 2, 2023



## מה בפַּרְשָׁה • In This Week's Parashah

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





### Bereishit 32:25

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

### בראשית לב:כה

וַיִּתְּרֵי יַעֲקֹב לְבִדּוֹ וַיֵּאָבֶק אִישׁ עִמּוֹ  
עַד עֲלֹת הַשָּׁחַר:

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

### Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

Our Rabbis explained that this was Esav's angel.

### רש"י

וּפְרָשׁוֹ רְבוּתָנוּ זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה  
נִשְׁהוּא שָׂרוֹ שֶׁל עֲשׂוֹ.

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

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

### חזקוני

מִלֵּאָה בְּדַמוֹת אִישׁ לְעַכְבּוֹ שְׁלֹא יוּכַל לְבָרֵחַ וַיִּרְאֶה  
הוּא הַבְּטָחוֹת הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׁלֹא יִזְקְהוּ עֲשׂוֹ.

### Hizkuni (France, 800 years ago)

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





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

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



## דְּבַשׁ • One-Minute Debate

**Debate: Some fights will never end.**

### *How to play:*

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



### *Disagree!*

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



### *Agree!*

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



## שאלות השבוע • Parashah Scavenger Hunt

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

### aliyot:

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

**haftarah:** Ovadiah 1:1 to 1:21

*Good luck!*

1 How many men were marching with Esav?

2 What did Yaakov demand from the angel?

3 What name does Yaakov give to the place where he wrestled with the angel?

4 What is Esav's home called?

5 What does Yaakov tell his family to get rid of?

6 Where was Rahel buried?

7 What king of Edom has the same name as a king of Israel?

9 How many times does Yaakov find out that his name will become Yisrael?

8 Who in our parashah shares a name with an animal?



10 **From the haftarah:** The Hebrew word פֶּרֶק (perek) often means "chapter." How does Ovadiah use this word?



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\*  
Look for the answers on page 8!





## Bereishit 35:8

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

## בראשית לה:ח

וַתָּמָת דְּבִרָה מִיְנֻקַּת רִבְקָה  
וַתִּקְבֹּר מִתַּחַת לְבֵית אֵל תַּחַת הָאֵלֹן  
וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ אֵלֹן בְּכֹוֹת:



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

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

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

## Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

What's Devorah doing with Yaakov's family?

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

## רש"י

מָה עֲנִין דְּבוֹרָה בְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב?

אֵלָּא לְפִי שְׁאֲמַרְהָ רִבְקָה לְיַעֲקֹב  
”וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי וְלִקְחָתִיךָ מִשָּׁם” (בראשית  
כז:מא), שְׁלַחָה דְּבוֹרָה אֶצְלוֹ  
לְפָדוֹן אָרָם לְצֵאת מִשָּׁם,  
וּמָתָה בְּדֶרֶךְ.

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





## דקדוק • Grammar

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

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

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



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



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

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





## מִדְרָשׁ • Midrash

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

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



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

### Midrash Sekhel Tov

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

### מדרש שכל טוב

אוֹתָן שְׁתֵּי שָׁעוֹת שֶׁהִשְׁקִיעַ לוֹ  
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בִּיצִיאָתוֹ  
מִבֵּית אָבִיו וְאָמּוֹ הִחְזִירָתוֹ לוֹ  
בְּחִזְרָתוֹ לְבֵית אָבִיו, לָכֵן בְּתֵיב  
"וַיִּזְרַח לוֹ" - זָרְחָה לוֹ ב' שָׁעוֹת  
בְּעֵבֹרוֹ קֵדָם זְמַנָּהּ.

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

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





## How should we talk about our belongings?

At first Esav refuses to accept gifts from Yaakov, saying: **יֵשׁ לִי רַב אֲחִי** (I have tons, my brother) (Bereishit 33:8).

And Yaakov tries to convince Esav to take the gifts:

### Bereishit 33:11

"Please accept the present I brought you, for God has favored me and I have **everything**."

### בראשית לג:יא

קַח נָא אֶת בְּרִכְתִּי אֲשֶׁר הִבָּאת לָךְ  
כִּי חֲנֻנִי אֱלֹקִים וְכִי יֵשׁ לִי כָל...

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

### Rashi (France, 1,000 years ago)

**I have everything** - all my needs are met.

But Esav spoke with boasting, saying "I have tons" (33:8) - way more than I need.

### רש"י

יֵשׁ לִי כָל - כָּל סְפוּקִי.

וַיַּעֲשֵׂוּ דִבָּר בְּלִשׁוֹן גָּאוֹה "יֵשׁ לִי רַב"  
- יוֹתֵר וְיוֹתֵר מִכְּדֵי צָרְכִי.

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



### Parashah Scavenger Hunt Answers:

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