



Mesorah Mag

The Weekly Magazine of the Orthodox Community at Rutgers Hillel

Tisch at 76 Jefferson St. at 9:30 pm!

"Mesorah Mag is my favorite newspaper."

Andrew Getraer, Executive Director of Rutgers Hillel

Being Frum

by Ari Podborcer

In Parshat Vayishlach, there is the famous line, "Im Lavan garti, v'acher ad atah", "I have journeyed with Lavan, and I have stayed until now". Besides for being the lyrics to a song more beautiful than Stairway to Heaven, this is a very important line. Rashi explains from a midrash that the word "garti", comes from the word "ger", or alien. This implies that while in Lavan's house, despite the prolonged time he spent there, Yaakov was always an alien; he did not fit into the household. Rather, as the midrash explains, Yaakov used this time to grow in Torah, regardless of his surroundings. The gematriya of garti, gimmel reish tuf ud, equals 613. Yaakov is saying that he kept all six hundred and thirteen mitzvot during his time in Lavan's house. And Lavan was no saint, er, rabbi. His house was one of regular idolatry, shady business dealings, and other inappropriate acts that no G-d fearing Jew should ever come close to. Yaakov is saying that he lived with Lavan, yet was not affected by him at all.

Rav Yaakov Ruderman points out a contradiction, however. If Yaakov kept the 613 mitzvot, is it not obvious that he didn't emulate any of his ways? Just being around Lavan and some of his more egregious acts is bound to be a sin. Therefore, it seems that keeping every mitzvah of the torah, to the letter, and emulating the lifestyle of Lavan are possible to do together. How can this be? Rav Frand says it may seem that way, but no – he points out the difference between being observant and being religious. The Sifrei Kedoshim (holy books) explain that observance means keeping the Torah to the best of your ability. Religiosity means placing the Torah



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Schedule of Times

Shabbat Morning:
9:30 am
S"Z Kriat Shma: 9:30 am
Lunch @ Weiss':
Leaving Hillel @ 12:30
Mincha: 4:20 pm
Shabbat ends: 5:17 pm

Weekdays

Shacharit & Breakfast:
8:15 am
Rambam Shiur
following breakfast
Mincha/Ma'ariv:
4:15 pm

Next Friday

Candlelighting: 4:14 pm
Friday Evening
Prayers: 5:30 pm



before everything else, not letting anything affect your values. And that is what Yaakov did. He remained observant, keeping the mitzvos. But he also maintained his religious standing. He did not allow himself to fall in the face of Lavan's ways.

This is a lesson we all can learn. In today's world, where it has never been easier to be an observant Jew, we must stick to our guns and ensure that we strive to fulfill every mitzvah. But, in the face of adversity, we must also maintain our desire for more, and keep to our goals, our values and always remember that we have the Torah to guide us.

Good Shabbos!

Past, Present, and Future

by Myriam Brumi

At the end of last week's parsha, Parshat Vayetztei, we see Yaakov being very proactive with his life and taking charge; he escapes Lavan's house with his wives and children. When Lavan confronts him about leaving, Yaakov takes a stand because he knows that in order for his descendants to achieve their destiny, he needs to leave Lavan's house. In the beginning of this week's parsha, Parshat Vayishlach, we see the same active Yaakov. He does everything he needs to do – davening (praying), preparing for war, and preparing gifts for Esav. He even fights against Esav's angel – according to Rashi, this was to get the bracha (blessing) of the bechora (firstborn) justly instead of through trickery, unlike when he got the bracha from Yitzchak.



In both of these instances, Yaakov acts to get what he knows the future nation needs to succeed. However, when it comes to his personal life, Yaakov seems to be more passive. We see this in last week's parsha when the focus is the Imahot (Matriarchs) and their relationship with regard to Yaakov and their children. Yaakov seems to have no input in the matter. In this week's parsha as well, when it comes to Deena,

Yaakov doesn't speak up. Instead the brothers take charge and defend their sister to try to preserve the family name. Although the means of preserving their sister's honor is wrong, the Torah itself justifies their action. This is seen by their discussion with Yaakov – when he reprimands them, the Torah gives Shimon and Levi the last word, which shows that they were right to act.

I think that the Torah is showing us the importance of preserving the future as well as the past and present by juxtaposing the two incidents. Yaakov, with his actions in the scene of P'gishat (meeting) Esav, illustrates the importance of thinking about the future and the ramifications your present actions have for future generations. In a way, we are laying foundations for the people after us. However, the brothers of Deena show us the importance of our actions for our families and friends and other interpersonal relationships (including the one with Hashem) in the present. It is important to preserve those relationships as well and make them the best they can be. Deena's brothers were in fact trying to protect her, even if they got carried away. Killing all of Shechem was strategically necessary for survival, but what they did afterwards was overboard, which was unacceptable for that day and age. However, standing up for their sister, even if it had nothing to do for future generations is just as important as what Yaakov did for the future generations as a forefather. This dvar Torah was inspired from the teachings of Shani Taragin, so thank you Shani for inspiring all of us, directly and indirectly.



Parshah Points

by Miriam Leichtman

At the beginning of this week's parsha, Esau is coming towards Jacob with 400 men. In order to prepare for this encounter, Jacob does three things: he sends a gift to Esau, he divides his family into two camps, and he prays to God.

That evening, Jacob takes his family across the Jabbok river. According to Rashi, Jacob forgot a few small bottles, so he goes back across the river where he wrestles with Esau's angel. Although the angel succeeds in dislodging his hip (which is why we cannot eat the sciatic nerve), he does not succeed in beating Jacob. Right before dawn, the angel asks Jacob to let him go, but Jacob refuses to release him without receiving a blessing in return. (I guess this is where R' Weiss gets it from.) The blessing that Jacob receives is the change of his name to Israel, because he has wrestled with an angel and men and prevailed.

In the morning, Jacob sees Esau coming and lines up his family to meet him. When the two brothers meet, they embrace. Jacob's entire family bows to Esau in greeting, and there is no bloodshed – Esau just leaves and goes on his merry way.

The next place where Jacob's family camps is the city of Shechem. One day when Dina, Jacob's daughter, is walking around, Shechem (the prince) sees her, falls madly in love, rapes her, and then tells his father Hamor that he wants to marry her. When Hamor comes to Jacob to settle the match and encourage marriage between their two families, Dina's brothers tell him that in order for this union to occur, the entire city of Shechem needs to be circumcised, which they then do. On the third day, Simeon and Levi go out, kill all the men and loot the city. When Jacob takes them to task for their actions, they defend their actions upholding the honor of their sister. After this embarrassing encounter, God tells Jacob to Bethel. There, God Himself renames Jacob, and once again promises that the nation that comes from Jacob will be great.

The parsha ends with a couple of very sad deaths. While traveling from Bethel to Ephrath, the family stops in Bethlehem, where Rachel passes away while giving birth to Benjamin. At the end of the narrative, Isaac passes away and both of his sons bury him.

The sidrah ends with an account of the descendants of Esau.

Mesorah Mag

Editor - in -Chief:

Miriam Leichtman

Layout Editor:

Jeff Rabinowitz

Calendar Editor:

Talia Friedman

Contributing Writers:

Ari Podhorcer,

Myriam Brami

Want to write for us?
Sign up after Havdalah
in the Hillel lobby.

You can reach us at:
Mesorahmag@gmail.com

Jewish Joke

"I'm so upset," said Benny to his Rabbi. "I took my son-in-law into my clothing business and yesterday I caught him kissing one of the models!"

"Have a little patience!" advised the Rabbi. "After all, men will be men. So he kissed one of the models, so what, it's not that terrible."

"But you don't understand," said Benny. "I make men's clothes."



Mesorah Calendar

Sunday	Souper Sunday Night Learning -- 8:30 pm @ 76 Jefferson St.
Tuesday	What's Hannukah All About? -- 7 pm @ Hillel Women's Shiur w/ Miri Cohen -- 8:30 pm @ 27b Huntington St.
Wednesday	What's Hannukah All About? -- 8 pm @ Hillel
Thursday	Hannukah Candle Making -- 8 pm @ Hillel

Women's Seduat Shilishit at the Weisses at 4 pm tomorrow!

Interested in Shiur and Beer?
Talk to Dan Rosenblum to see how you can help out.

Jewish Joke Part Deux

Issy goes to meet his new son-in-law to be, Benjy. He says, "So nu, tell me Benjy, what do you do?" "I study the Torah," he replies.

"But Benjy, you are going to marry my daughter, how are going to feed and house her?" "No problem," says Benjy, "I study Torah and it says God will provide."

"But you will have children, how will you educate them?" asks Issy. "No problem," says Benjy, "I study Torah and it says God will provide."

When Issy returns home, his wife anxiously asks him what Benjy is like. "Well," says Issy, "he's a lovely boy. I only just met him and he already thinks I'm God."

Midnight Breakfast! Hooray! Woohoo!
Coming to a Hillel near you!
December 14th at 11 at night,
It will be a wonderous sight.
Amazingly awesome, incredibly neat,
How much good food
there will be to eat!
So please come on over, let's have some
fun,
The party ain't over till a quarter 'till 1!
We hope, come then, to see you there,
To participate in this splendorous affair!

Want the eruv to be UP?
Then help check it!
Speak with Andrew Cohen or Sam Kaplan to discuss how you can get involved!

Chanukah Ball Tomorrow Night!
\$5 at Hillel and \$7 at the door!
8:00 in the MPR.

